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Near East & South Asia

ALGERIA

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Accord With Italy To Teach Italian Signed

92AF0545C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
3 Mar 92 p 4

[Article: "Signing of Agreement on Teaching of Italian"]

[Text] On 2 March, in a ceremony attended by Mr. Djilali Liabes, Italian and Algerian officials and faculty members of the University of Bouzareah, Italian Ambassador Antonio Badini and the chief of staff of the Ministry of Universities, Mr. Omar Benbekhti, signed an executive agreement to establish a program of Italian language instruction at the University of Bouzareah. This academic program, a new milestone in terms of strengthening relations between the two countries, was born out of a shared recognition that Italian is not yet spoken as widely as it should be, considering the intense cultural, economic, political and social ties existing between the two countries.

With demand for Italian language instruction growing and prospects for its diffusion at the secondary level, the initiative will involve the sending of Italian experts, provision of technical equipment and bibliographical materials, and the granting of study scholarships to Algerian teachers and university students with a view to training Algerian trainers, who will then take charge of the Italian language instruction program.

The University of Bologna will assume academic responsibility for the program which, thanks to the financing pledged by the Italian Government under the Italian-Algerian cooperation protocol, will serve ultimately to strengthen interuniversity relations between the two countries.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Harassment at Tunisian Border Described

92AF0538A Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
2 Mar 92 p 5

[Article by Omar Touati: "Why Are Algerians Harassed?"]

[Text] For over two months, Algerians returning from Tunisia or who have been turned back at border stations by that country's police have complained of the coercive, arbitrary, and sometimes discriminatory measures to which they have been subjected by those same agencies, contrary to any and all rules of decency and hospitality. This failure to observe international rules governing admission and the observance of formalities was earlier the subject of an article in these same columns in January 1992. We recently crossed the border for the purpose of observing in person what grounds our fellow citizens' had for their complaints, particularly since police personnel stationed at the Algerian border have reported countless arbitrary rejections to us.

Wednesday, 19 February 1992: At precisely 1945, we found ourselves at the Algerian border post of Oum-Theboul. Some 30 passengers of every age, male and female, were complying with the routine customs-police formalities. Those returning from Tunisia looked rather grey because of the "miserics" they had to endure as soon as they entered that brother country. One quinquagenarian from Constantine traveling with his family was more than disappointed: "I no longer recognize Tunisia. I have the distinct impression that it is an Algerian 'witch hunt.' Any vehicle registered in our country is invariably stopped at every mobile inspection point, where one must go through the routine presentation of documents, questioning, systematic, thorough searches of baggage, and the whole rigamarole."

When questioned about these Draconian measures, Algerian police told us they have recorded dozens of them. We were stunned. Formalities at Algerian border stations are handled speedily and efficiently. Police and customs agents work steadily and with a smile, but carefully and skillfully, despite their apparent fatigue due to a lack of sleep.

2045: A Tunisian border post. Icy fog and biting cold assault us as soon as we get out of the taxi, while a dozen Algerian vehicles come to a halt on the other side of the barrier. Their occupants go through the usual red tape accompanying one's entry into the country. Our driver, who travels back and forth between Annaba and Tunis regularly, is well-known to the Tunisian customs agents. Their station chief, one Matoussi, good-naturedly greets us with a smile. It is a good omen, we say to ourselves. Passports in hand, we proceed to the police checkpoint. The place itself is designed to generate apprehension. Behind a counter about six meters in length that looks much more like a bar than a reception window are two uniformed Tunisian police officers. With a cold gaze and handdog look, they hand us our entry cards. Where are the old smile and speed? A lively discussion suddenly breaks out between a policeman and an Algerian preparing to enter Tunisia. The reason: The Tunisian clerk claims the photo that the Algerian has in his passport is not of him, quite simply because the individual in the passport photo, our fellow countryman, wears no glasses or mustache, but now he does. What is wrong with that? Furthermore, this same Algerian has just gone through the Algerian checkpoint. If there had been any dissimilarity between his appearance and the passport photo, the Algerian police would have taken the proper measures. A Ms. B.A. has to intervene before the policeman believes it is indeed the same person. Our compatriot barely escapes being sent back, as the Tunisian policeman in question admits. Upon submitting our travel documents, we are subjected to routine questioning: Where are you going in Tunisia? At what hotel will you be staying? How many times have you visited Tunisia? Along with many other questions. One would have thought we were potential suspects, so obvious was the distrust on the faces of our questioners. Once we had completed the formalities and our baggage had undergone the routine customs searches, we got back on the road

to Tunis via Tabarka. The road was in disastrous condition, with potholes, mud, and cracks forcing our driver to proceed slowly. The first mobile control point came as we left Tabarka. A motorcycle cop with an infrared flashlight motioned us to a halt. His two colleagues were searching the baggage belonging to the occupants of a taxi registered in Constantine. We endured the same fate: presentation of our travel documents, questioning, a systematic, rigorous search of our baskets. We arrived in Beja. Upon leaving that city, the same scenario was repeated all over again, this time with policemen in BMW's (V.R.). The latter even took our passports from us, went back to their car, calling the driver aside to ask him if we might not be carrying drugs. This attitude on the part of Tunisian policemen, as ridiculous as it is grotesque, leads one to assume a flagrant attitude of suspicion directed at Algerians. And yet, despite the serious economic crisis raging in our country, Algerians are pouring millions in hard cash into Tunisian coffers every day. After this latest inspection lasting nearly half an hour, we got back on the road. Upon leaving Medjez-El-Bab, a third inspection was conducted by a vehicle identical to the one at Beja. The Algerian vehicle registered in Constantine that had left ahead of us was also stopped for a routine search. Once again we endured the same fate, except that our inspectors took a more human, conciliatory attitude. It should be emphasized that several other vehicles registered abroad, particularly in Libya, were never bothered. We observed this while being forced to stop while such cars went by in both directions. Why such discriminatory measures? Our country is definitely experiencing internal problems that are gradually getting better, but why are Tunisians concerned by a purely Algerian affair? Based on our investigations and other reliable accounts, the Tunisian police have begun to take drastic measures aimed at any Algerian wearing a beard! They have expanded such restrictive measures to the holders of passports bearing several entry and exit stamps. Finally, they have recently begun to treat all Algerians in a like manner. Algerians, like all other peoples on this planet, have their dignity and pride to protect. When they go abroad, they are not going begging. On the contrary, they are spending hard cash and bringing back trifles and will no longer allow themselves to be similarly harassed in any country whatsoever. We hereby call upon the proper authorities to take whatever measures are needed to put an end to the Algerian witch hunt in certain countries, particularly Tunisia, with which we have secular ties based on blood, brotherhood, and good neighbor relations.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

FFS Leader on Human Rights, FIS Situation
 92AF0520A Algiers L'OBSERVATEUR in French
 19-25 Feb 92 pp 14-15

[Interview with FFS (Front of Socialist Forces) leader Hocine Ait-Ahmed by L'OBSERVATEUR; place and date not given]

[Text] Political party leaders are surely perturbed. Whether or not they are skeptical or calm, their malaise is

evident. Ait-Ahmed, true to himself, denounces everything (the coup d'etat, the state of emergency...) in one fell swoop, while following his logic: to defend human rights, democracy, and the return to free elections as soon as possible. Kasdi Merbah, more subtly, and without openly departing from the position of the authorities, nevertheless supports Ait-Ahmed in his demand that the constraints imposed by the state of emergency be lifted as quickly as possible. It is true that the one has proved that his party is representative, while the other has a party to build.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] You have strongly opposed dissolving the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]. Don't you think the FIS is an unconstitutional party and that the risk of letting it come to power is too great? And don't you fear the reaction of your base?

[Ait-Ahmed] First I will reassure you. I have no problem with the base. People have fantasized so much about problems with the base that in the end, every time an attempt is made to destabilize us, it only galvanizes the ranks. I am a militant for human rights, and at a time when the human rights were not in fashion, I wrote a thesis on human rights in the OAU's (Organization of African Unity) charter and practice. That took me five years of work, so for me, freedoms of expression and association are the fundamental rights. With respect to the FIS problem, it wasn't me who approved that party. Better yet: the FIS was rapidly approved, although the FFS has experienced the worst difficulties. We have even tried to introduce the FFS 2. [sentence as published] PNow, once we have put forward the fait accompli and the FIS is approved, it is necessary to develop a strategy that can carry out the fight. That is why the FFS has had a strategy of clear opposition from the very beginning, which has nothing to do with the internal corruption of power and the FLN [National Liberation Front]. We do not want to leave the FIS with a monopoly on political opposition, and especially a monopoly on public moral life. We have never once ceased to denounce acts of violence and to call upon the public authorities to protect citizens. On the contrary, we have witnessed true neglect.

However, we do not believe that during all that time everything was left alone, and then, one fine day, all the street demonstrations were planned, the crisis escalated, and then the legislative process was stopped. Our reaction is always to place ourselves as a third alternative: neither integrationist State, nor police State. Our position vis-a-vis the FIS is one of principle and a political position. We do not say: "Let Algeria perish rather than a principle." Principles should serve our country.

The FIS problem is not one of spontaneous combustion. The FLN, and in general all men in power, have been accomplices in the birth and development of this phenomenon. Once the problem has been identified, it is necessary to resolve it politically and without repression. Repression begets violence and terrorism.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] Do you think that by letting the FIS come to power, you would have really been able to manage it politically?

[Ait-Ahmed] If we had not been the special target of the authorities since the beginning, if we had had, as did the FIS, coverage by the state media, particularly television, for our demonstrations and our activities, as Abassi and Belhadj had, we might have a much more important role today.

We did everything to ghettoize ourselves in Kabylie. Fortunately, we have broken the bars. We demonstrated after our congress last March that we have a national organization. If we had been able to spread our message, we would perhaps have helped resolve the FIS problem. For example: during Ramadan, while other parties were contentedly at their dinners, we held conferences and debates with the people from the FIS, at Bab El-Oued, Kouba, Belcourt.

We tried to convince the youth. We must move toward the youth. It is a fact that they have no place other than the mosque, which has pushed them away.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] What is your analysis of the nature of the current party in power? According to you, are we in a police state now that we are rid of the integrationist State?

[Ait-Ahmed] We are, completely so. The state of emergency gives enormous special powers to the Interior Ministry. Even though brother Boudiaf has solemnly stated that political parties will not be impeded in their activities and that no one will touch their individual or public liberties, a close reading of the text demonstrates something else: the arrests, persecutions, detention centers, military tribunals, with none of these measures accompanied by guarantees.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] But these measures are primarily directed toward the FIS. Do you think they are also directed to other parties?

[Ait-Ahmed] In our view, respect for human rights should apply to everyone. After the 1965 coup d'etat, I was transferred from Lambese to the Maison-Caree prison. Ben-Bella's supporters had been arrested and the lawyers who had defended me against Ben-Bella asked me if they should agree to defend those people. I told them, "Yes, with no hesitation." It is necessary that in this country the traditions of defense and public trials be created according to the universal declaration of human rights. These principles should be applied to everyone, without exception. Until we have attained that development in our mentality, we cannot say that democracy is rooted in the hearts and minds of the citizens.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] So you think that the nature of the authorities has not changed, whatever may be Mr. Boudiaf's personality?

[Ait-Ahmed] I take no account of his personality. One should not personalize it. I have always had excellent relations with brother Boudiaf. I hold him in total respect, but that is not the problem. I am speaking of a political regime that appears to be seeking reinstallation. Even before Boudiaf was there, one felt a desire for internal

restructuring of the Government, and the FIS was only a pretext for the authorities to restructure themselves and give themselves the resources to maintain themselves.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] You ask that the electoral process be revived, and even that an election date be fixed. Do you really think that Algerians consider that a priority?

[Ait-Ahmed] I have not mentioned reviving the electoral process again. That is history. It is not a mechanism one can take up at the same point it was left. There was a first round. It's not serious that the second round was prevented. That is the tradition in Haiti, and Algeria is something else altogether. My conviction is that in almost all of the 19 elections in which the FFS was on the ballot, it would have carried the field, particularly in the symbolic votes such as Algiers.

The president of the Republic has constitutional powers permitting him to safeguard democracy. Eventually, the people today in power would have been able to see that the FIS is proposing a law in violation of democracy and the public liberties. It has advanced to the second review, and if it passes the second review, the Assembly is automatically dissolved. In that worst case scenario, the intervention that occurred on 11 January would have been able to occur later. We were prepared to use the courts to carry out serious opposition, an awareness campaign, and we were persuaded that this party is riddled with so many contradictions, so many internal movements, one more violent than the other, and with no serious plans, that if it were in power it would have problems. The municipal elections have shown that there was not enough experience and that cost it more than one million votes. What is needed, then, is not a reprise of the electoral process, but rather one of the democratic process.

So how to start again? With the establishment of a provisional government and the resignation of the current government, which should come from itself.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] What type of government do you see?

[Ait-Ahmed] A government of people who are nonpartisan, but politicized. Not necessarily technocrats, but not partisan. I do not see a coalition government. What is important is the political impact of that government. Economic and social measures are not sufficient without the announcement of a return to popular legitimacy. The number-one problem in our country is legitimacy. A constitutional base is needed in our country, now more than ever. We hope the constitution will have as its objectives: human rights, equality between the sexes, the separation of church and state, and the establishment of balanced and harmonious institutions. In other words, diminish the powers of the presidency, which are too great.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] You still retain your idea of a constituent assembly. Do you think the idea has a chance of coming to fruition?

[Ait-Ahmed] Yes, it is perhaps utopian. But a utopia is the beginning of a dream. Since 1962 our country has not had a normal constitution.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] But aren't you afraid that if elections are organized by a constituent assembly, an Islamic majority will result?

[Ait-Ahmed] I am convinced that it will not. First, because of election reform through equal access to the means of information, and through a review of the voting lists.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] Aren't you afraid that Algerians are currently more concerned with their daily lives than with the elections?

[Ait-Ahmed] Every authoritarian country, the Stalinist ones, for example, tells its citizens: "Democracy is a bourgeois luxury. Pluralism is a waste of time." It is an old argument. What is the result? Today, the USSR is in the process of begging its food survival from capitalists. Nowhere has political dictatorship succeeded in developing a country. There should be a correlation between democracy, on the one hand, and economic and social development.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] Mr. Boudiaf said in his speech that people involved in corruption should pay. What do you think?

[Ait-Ahmed] When I returned to my country, I pronounced the word "er-rahma." It is the exact opposite of settling accounts. In Algeria, politics has fallen to such a level that people always think in terms of personal vengeance, of class vengeance. That said, the Algerian people should know the people responsible for the turmoil and ruin that has wracked our country. But it is not necessary that they turn the process into a witch-hunt and political exploitation.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] One now hears of creating a national unity front that would be comprised of members from the national movement. What do you think?

[Ait-Ahmed] The first good news. In principle, we are in favor of discussions. With respect to wanting to seek formulas for political support for a government, I believe that people are fairly well informed... To build the country, it is necessary to abandon the old methods of manipulation and intrigue.

FIS Insistence Blamed for Growing Civil War

92AF0497A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
13-19 Feb 92 p 6

[Text] In its latest statements, the leadership of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] has unveiled the true features of its purpose and the true nature of its instrument. Under the cover of politics death is being turned into something normal. The germs of civil war are beginning to establish themselves, little by little, in people's minds.

In successive statements the trustees of Islam have touched three forbidden subjects that have always been the strength

of the Algerian people. These are three taboos by means of which the nation has tried more or less to resist cupidity:

- By questioning the Army, asking it indirectly to take its side regarding one of its statements, the FIS leadership is calling for nothing less than rebellion within an institution, which has been placed above political parties and political ambitions.
- In another of its statements it has practically issued a call to civil war to its members and sympathizers, who were asked to resist, by every means available, state institutions and everything that can represent the state, including public property.
- To make things unmistakably clear, the leadership of the FIS, in Communique No. 12, called on the international community to isolate Algeria by inviting... "all countries having relations with Algeria not to enter into any international or regional agreement or treaty with it..."

Rebellion within the Army, a struggle against all public institutions, and isolation of Algeria at the international level—there is the answer of the FIS to the interruption of the electoral process.

Power at any price, or rather setting the war machine in motion and a scorched earth policy. Power at any price, even conquering it over thousands of corpses and by provoking civil war. There in simplified form is the program of a party that calls itself Islamic.

Those who were captivated by the moralising content of sermons and the promises to install social justice should ask themselves what could happen tomorrow!

In June 1991 the insurrection was begun under cover of a political strike. This time it is a "dijihad" [Islamic holy war], which has been proclaimed. Through voices from the mosques Algerians have been asked to kill each other, while their sleeping partners and their protectors are very far from the battlefield and from the spectacle of desolation which many cities in the country present to us.

Many citizens had thought that there was no longer any risk of repeating what they went through in June 1991.

Now the war machine has been set in motion. At the gates of the mosques young people are used as cannon fodder. Acts of sabotage against public property have been encouraged, and the cycle of attacks has well and truly begun.

The number of griefstricken Algerian families increases day by day. How will all of these acts and this kind of behavior, so foreign to the culture and memory of our people, be justified?

How will we dress the wounds that have accumulated over the past few days? Are we going to continue to hear sheikhs give us lessons in morality on religious subjects, when the squadrons of death have already gone into action across the country?

FIS: Widespread Armed Insurrection Doubted

92AF0497B Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
13-19 Feb 92 p 13

[Article by Abdelkrim Debbih: "Kalashnikov Weapons Desperately Sought"; first four paragraphs are ALGERIE ACTUALITE introduction]

[Text]

Arms and the Law

Arms are regulated by Decrees No. 63-85 of 16 March 1963 and 63-90 of 7 October 1963. They are classified into several categories, the first of which is war materiel, including automatic pistols with a caliber greater than 7.65 mm, rifles and carbines of all calibers, machineguns and machine pistols, and finally ammunition for these weapons. The decrees also define war materiel, devices carrying combat arms, and defensive materiel, together with automatic pistols with a caliber of less than 7.65 mm. Possession of these weapons is prohibited. Regarding hunting weapons, daggers, or swords, their possession is subject to regulation. In the eyes of the law only the possession of collector's weapons is free of regulation.

Kalashnikov

This is an assault rifle, well-known throughout the world, and made by the Soviet Union. The AK-47 has a 32-round clip. Its practical range is 600 meters. Its caliber is 7.65 mm.

MAT-49

Its caliber is 9 mm. It has a 32-round magazine and is French-made.

Automatic Pistols

Automatic pistols [P.A.] are available in calibers of 6.35, 7.65, or 9 mm. They are weapons for self-defense.

Will Algeria catch fire? Although there is no armed confrontation between Algerians, this possibility is excluded by those charged with ensuring civil peace. The view that Algeria is allegedly close to civil war is definitely exaggerated and is based on pure, political speculation. The conditions do not exist in Algeria for an armed clash between groups of people serving under the banner of a party, a group, or faction which makes violent action its credo.

The most recent armed actions carried out here and there in Algeria by small groups claiming to support a political form of Islam are very properly disturbing to the people and the military leadership. This is more especially the case, since every time that firearms are used, someone is killed. At the time of the attack on the military base at Guemmar, one of the attackers arrested stated that his movement, that is, the armed Islamic movement, was sufficiently well-organized to carry out an armed insurrection throughout Algeria. This statement aroused major concern at the same time that it raised some questions. In

effect, how was it possible in a country, which has always been held under a mailed fist for a military organization, to emerge and to develop to the point of considering waging an armed insurrection throughout the country, without public opinion or the authorities, whose positions are known in this connection, knowing anything about it?

In the view of the command of the National Gendarmerie, there is nothing to this. It is true that the attack on the base at Guemmar, as reported in the press, could have led public opinion to think that this was a large-scale operation and the first of a series of generalized attacks, considering the firepower deployed, the surprise effect, and the place selected. In fact, regarding the armed attacks carried out in the past, beginning with the police barracks in Soumaa, the motive was always the same: obtaining weapons. Each attack and each operation appeared to be a real raid whose objective, for the attackers, was to obtain weapons to set up resistance groups or armed centers to serve as part of an eventual strategy of seizing power by violence. These attacks proved at least one thing: in Algeria there are not yet any networks for providing weapons coming from abroad. Until now the few armed networks known to the security services and already broken up are engaged in a more or less substantial traffic in hunting weapons or small caliber, individual pistols.

The most substantial network, reported by a citizen, operated between Djelfa and Tiaret and was concerned with the fraudulent importation of hunting weapons, whose ultimate use had nothing to do with an armed uprising. The traffic involved about 50 shotguns. This was the greatest seizure ever made by the National Gendarmerie which, during all of 1991, recorded 321 cases of crimes involving the possession of prohibited weapons. The weapons involved in these cases were automatic pistols, often starting pistols for athletic events, "reworked" to use live ammunition. In this case this meant that they could fire a half dozen rounds during their operating life. The largest category of weapons involved in this kind of market is the shotgun.

The shotgun is a weapon much in demand for traditional reasons, which make the person having one, particularly in the countryside, a man of some standing. For him the shotgun is more of a collector's item than a weapon for hunting or self defense purposes. The misuse of a shotgun for common crimes or subversive activities is exceptionally rare.

At the time of the incidents in June 1991 the National Gendarmerie reported to its units on the use of hunting weapons in the 1 May Section of Algiers, where several gendarmes carrying a wounded man to Mustapha Hospital were hit by buckshot. A shotgun, which is available to about one family out of four in Algeria, is easy to handle and is a formidable and murderous weapon at close quarters. It is the only weapon, together with rifles used for target practice and at carnivals, whose possession, subject to strict regulation, is tolerated by the authorities. For the past five years the importation of hunting weapons has declined drastically in Algeria. This is the reason for the

growth in black market transactions in such weapons, where each one is sold for more than 50,000 DA [Algerian dinars]. The areas most susceptible to this kind of trade are above all the provinces of southern Algeria, where the borders are more permeable than those of northern Algeria.

After the shotgun the weapon, which is reportedly most often being traded surreptitiously, at present is the P.A. (automatic pistol). Often of the "Perfecta" brand, this small-caliber, individual weapon is much in demand for self-defense purposes. It is sold for 5,000 to 8,000 DA to people who want to have their own means of defense (for carrying money or for self defense). It is not widely found. The most substantial seizure of this kind of weapon goes back a few weeks ago, when an individual was able to bring a consignment of about 50 "Perfectas" into Algeria over the eastern border. Originating in the Middle East, this traffic has no connection with possible subversive groups. The rest of the crimes involving illegal possession of weapons includes those which have been found or are homemade. Among the weapons that have been found, the National Gendarmerie also reported a MAT-49 submachinegun dating from the war of liberation. In June 1991 a gendarmerie vehicle was hit by a volley from this kind of weapon. The gun is reportedly still in circulation and therefore has probably been added to the military arsenal of the Islamist groups, who also have two Kalashnikov rifles and a semi-automatic rifle. The semi-automatic rifle was captured at Guemmar, and the two Kalashnikov rifles were picked up at the time of the attack on the military base at Beni-Merad.

Apparently, these armed groups, not having any external base that could provide them with weapons, have followed the principle of Mao Tse-tung, who used to say that "their arsenals are the enemy." All of the attacks reported over the past six months are based on this need to obtain weapons. In the last few months attacks have even been reported against isolated police personnel to take away their weapons. This confirms the idea that "these groups of fighters" have no other source for obtaining weapons apart from the ANP [People's National Army] or the police forces.

Another novel feature is the recent appearance of homemade bombs. Made with locally available materials, these devices made their first appearance in Guemmar and then in Algiers. Filled with black powder, these bombs are very lethal up to a distance of 10 meters and contain in their metal casing bits of metal, nails, and screws. They have the reputation of being more likely to explode in the hands of their users than near their target. In effect, they are the poor man's weapon. In an urban setting their psychological effect could be a matter of deep concern for the security services if they are made in large quantity. The National Gendarmerie states that the process for making these bombs comes from Afghanistan. Knowledge of how to make them reportedly was brought back by Islamist activists who were in Afghanistan.

This network is composed of about 200 young men, according to some sources, and about 800, according to

other sources. They reportedly constitute the hard core of the Islamists. The majority of them never reached Kabul but stopped at Peshawar. Only a few of them were under fire, and they were more often used by the Afghan mudjahidin as domestic servants. A majority of them comes from Oued Souf, where they were born. These groups were reportedly set up because they were mostly itinerant peddlers, which made it possible for them to travel in this border area. This area has been considered a haven for smugglers since the beginning of the 1970's. All of those who attacked the post at Guemmar were born in this area. Members of the "El Hidja oua Tekfir" group are essentially based at the mosque at Belcourt, which is also known as the "Kabul" mosque, a reference to the Afghan capital. This is more of a folklore group, even though it pictures itself as the hard wing of the Islamist movement and even though its leaders had some contacts with Afghanistan. With a look of hell about him, searching for a battle to lead him to paradise, an activist member of the "Kabul" group is rarely from the Belcourt area.

He wears Afghan dress, has an Afghan style of beard, wears kohl [eye makeup] around his eyes, and looks like a "Ranger" down to his toes. He also tries to display more authority than the militant preachers of the FIS. Organized for the most "difficult" tasks, and which are therefore secret operations for the cause, he rarely is called on to speak. Therefore, he looks like a man of action rather than of words. However, you never see him during the battles fought between the security forces and FIS demonstrators. However, because he is a figure of folklore, wearing a U.S. Army blouse and his Afghan tunic, he can be taken seriously if a weapon falls into his hands. He can do a great deal of harm on behalf of a cause whose basic doctrine he does not know. At present his preferred weapon is a knife.

Will these young men one day make up the officer corps of an Islamist rebel movement in Algeria? First of all, this strategy will be difficult for them to carry out, because the source of the strength of the FIS is rather the mass movement which, as it waxes and wanes, will see armed operations take place in the future. It is this radicalization of the movement, now assuming the shape of a bloody "Intifadah" [uprising], which can lead to the massive importation of weapons. We have been told by an authorized source that the radicalization of the Islamist movement is far easier to manage than a civil war.

Merbah Discusses FIS, Economic Situation

92AF0566A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
2 Mar 92 p 7

[Interview with Algerian ex-Prime Minister Kasdi Merbah by Jamal Khashuqi; date and place not given: "Merbah to AL-HAYAH: Algeria's Crisis Is Political, We Demand National Dialogue Encompassing Everybody; Use of Force Within Framework of Law Is Acceptable"]

[Text] Algiers—Algerian ex-Prime Minister Kasdi Merbah has called for a dialogue among all Algerian factions to solve the political crisis. In an interview with AL-HAYAH,

he has criticized combining more than one ministry in a single portfolio, saying that Algeria has tried this experiment and that it has failed. He has attributed the failure to the dearth of people with the capability to manage large sectors. He has asserted that Algeria's crisis is more of a political crisis than an economic crisis.

Currently, Merbah heads the Algerian Movement for Justice and Development (MAJD), one of dozens of small Algerian parties. At one time, he was one of Algeria's most powerful men when he headed the intelligence agency during Boumediene's administration. Following is the text of the interview:

[Khashuqi] What is your party's position on the change taking place in Algeria?

[Merbah] We are now experiencing real political, economic, and social crises, including a crisis of confidence for which Chadli Bendjedid (the former president) is responsible. His resignation came late. He should have resigned in October 1988.

Mother Crisis

These crises cannot be solved unless the mother crisis, namely the political crisis, is solved. Mouloud Hamrouche's government tried to solve this crisis by focusing on the economy only through an open-door policy and by providing investment opportunities to foreigners. But the process failed, due to the lack of confidence at home and abroad. I see no solution except in a political dialogue among all factions; in forming a national unity government and a consultative council that has adequate powers; and in rectifying political ethics by fighting corruption, graft, and favoritism.

[Khashuqi] President Mohamed Boudiaf calls for a "fundamental change," which is what the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] also advocates. What is your position?

[Merbah] In wake of the October riots, I proposed that the faction ruling prior to those riots be boycotted. But Bendjedid, who had agreed initially, soon resumed his old ways when he thought that he had regained control of affairs. I disagreed with him when he kept the governor of Oran, who facilitated the business of Chadli Bendjedid's family. Initially, Bendjedid had agreed to oust the governor but he then came back to say that it would be better that the Oran governor be replaced within the context of a large-scale process to replace governors, so that it would not look as if he was being punished and expelled exclusively. I told Chadli: 'The objective is to expel him so we can regain the people's trust.' Even when some ministers were ousted, they were reappointed as ambassadors. The truth is that there was no true desire for fundamental change.

[Khashuqi] If it is necessary to oust the old ruling figures and to replace them with new and honest figures in order to regain the people's trust, then where will Boudiaf get such people?

[Merbah] This is the problem. The regime continues to be the same, with some slight alterations.

Salvation "Taxi"

[Khashuqi] What is the current regime's strategy?

[Merbah] It is evident that the government has defined its objectives in smashing the FIS, and then in marginalizing the other parties on the grounds that they don't represent anything and lack popularity and credibility, judging from the outcome of the canceled elections.

The government is building a new political apparatus that has not had any previous involvement with politics. But I don't believe that this is possible. As for the talk about restructuring, it is nothing new. Restructuring was first mentioned during Ahmed Ben Bella's administration and has been reiterated repeatedly since. It is also wrong to replace a number of cabinet ministries with one large ministry, because we don't have enough expertise to manage large sectors. This experiment was done during Boumediene's administration and it ended with our having to dismantle the Ministry of Industry because it got to be too big.

[Khashuqi] Do you think it is possible to smash the FIS?

[Merbah] Smashing the FIS will only bear temporary results. If no fundamental change is made and if a solution is not sought through a national dialogue, then the FIS will resurface in any future election, either in its present form or under a different form and a new name, and we will then face another crisis. A solution by force is inadequate.

Force and the Law

[Khashuqi] So do you support a solution using force?

[Merbah] We have called for a political solution and for a national dialogue, but with respect for the law. If there is need to use force, then it is all right, but provided it is within the framework of the law.

[Khashuqi] Will the state of emergency affect your party activity?

[Merbah] If the conditions improve, the state of emergency must be lifted. This state of emergency is faulted for giving broad powers to the minister of interior and the governors. Measures that undermine individual liberties and the hasty issuance of court sentences must be prevented. If the state of emergency is continued just to antagonize and harass the parties, then this will cause supporters to move away from the parties so that they will not be subjected to problems. This will lead to wiping out party plurality and we will return to the single-party system.

[Khashuqi] There are more than 40 parties in Algeria. So would you agree to a new law that re-charts the country's party map?

[Merbah] What has developed in Algeria is normal. Parties have multiplied after a long period of single-party rule. The same thing has happened in all countries that have moved from the single-party system to pluralism. Ultimately, some parties will disappear and the parties capable of representing a certain segment of the people will survive.

[Khashuqji] Have you had contacts with the government?

[Merbah] The only contact took place when Boudiaf summoned us to inform us that a state of emergency would be declared.

Algeria's Future

[Khashuqji] What is your vision of Algeria's future?

[Merbah] It is difficult to speculate. The economic and social situation is bad. We have to wait three months, at least. If the conditions develop positively, then we can be optimistic. But I fear further economic deterioration. Last year was a bad year. As for expectations for this year, the situation is not encouraging.

[Khashuqji] Can a democracy be established in Algeria without the Islamic tendency?

[Merbah] We call for participation by all tendencies.

[Khashuqji] The FIS alludes to its willingness to engage in dialogue, but President Boudiaf continues to refuse to hold dialogue with it. What is your comment on this?

[Merbah] Dialogue must be held with everybody. I have conveyed this to Boudiaf and I have said that it is wrong to isolate any party.

[Khashuqji] Are you prepared to participate in the planned consultative council?

[Merbah] Nobody has asked me to participate. The issue is that any council outside the context of a political dialogue and of a national solution will be ineffective. If they [the regime] want the parties and the political figures to participate, then these parties and figures must have a role and a responsibility.

Firmness With FIS Said Justified

92AF0546A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
3 Mar 92 p 1

[Editorial by Ammar I: "Being Just Means Being Firm"]

[Text] "The FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] finally banned! When will it be the turn of the other fundamentalist parties?" That is what ALGER REPUBLICAIN's front page should have said today.

By delaying its verdict once again, the administrative court decided otherwise. Our loyal readers will understand that this is a delay completely beyond our control.

We will not be silent, however, with our questionings and our concerns. Far from us any irreverent attitude or defiance with respect to the judicial institution.

The "achievements" of the FIS are so well-known that there is no need to flaunt them again. Its bill is now written in letters of blood and tears in our people's flesh and memory. But the FIS case is not a simple matter of common law. It is both a legal and a political matter. That is why it constitutes a test and an ordeal for the state of law

and for the determination expressed by the new government to restore completely the authority of the republic and its institutions.

Nothing could be more natural than for lawyers—accredited members of the bar—to defend their clients. But it becomes disturbing when groups and personalities in the fields of politics and the media set themselves up as a lobby to be political lawyers for the FIS and the other fundamentalist parties. That lobby exists, and it is already in action. It is working to trivialize fundamentalism and absolve it of the crimes it has already committed and those it is continuing to foment. That lobby's only argument is a single creed or slogan: "the fundamentalist parties are a reality that an administrative measure cannot suppress." Gentlemen, no one denies that as a system of ideas, fundamentalism has established itself in the social body. Or that it is eating away at that body like a malignant tumor. It is necessary to keep on stating that truth out of a duty to be clearheaded and in response to the demands of struggle. Only a long-term effort will be able to cure us of it.

But today—at the moment—fundamentalism is primarily an organized political reality working to overthrow the republic with word, pen, and Kalashnikov. That is why the only measure worthy of republican justice consists of declaring an irrevocable ban on the FIS and all the other fundamentalist parties: of taking legal steps to ensure that from now on, that type of party will be banned from our country's political reality. Today, being just means being firm on that question.

Commentary on Dissolution of FIS

92AF0545A Rabat L'OPINION in French 6 Mar 92
pp 1, 3

[Commentary by Khalid Jamaï: "President Boudiaf's Race Against the Clock"]

[Text] The dissolution of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] comes as no surprise. It was expected, even by the party's own militants. It was a politically logical next step for the new leaders, who had painstakingly prepared for it by creating the necessary conditions, first by arresting the FIS leadership, then by attacking the structure and the mid-level cadres. They have effectively disrupted the FIS's lines of communication and decapitated it. But for how long?

The administrative chamber of the court of Algiers rendered its decision in response to a petition from the Ministry of Interior based on the July 1989 political parties statute authorizing it to institute such actions "in case of serious violations of the laws in force or in case of an emergency or imminent threat to public order." The Interior Ministry's petition asked for the dissolution, or at least suspension, of the FIS, as the law provides for "suspension and/or dissolution."

In granting dissolution, the administrative chamber opted for the extreme solution. Of course, the FIS has a week to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court, which in turn has a month in which to make its ruling. It should also be

noted that the chamber announced its decision without making public the legal reasoning behind its order.

These reasons will be divulged once the lawyers get the order stayed.

It would be interesting and instructive to know these reasons.

It should also be noted that the grounds invoked by the Interior Ministry lead one to think there was an effort not to repudiate the decision taken by expresident Chadli. But aside from these arguments, the dissolution of the FIS—which in all likelihood will be upheld by the Supreme Court—overturns the Algerian political landscape and creates new problems for the country's leaders.

For clearly the dissolution of the FIS does not mean its disappearance. To the contrary, it condemns it to permanent clandestinity; which will make the task of those combating it all the more difficult, leading them to strengthen surveillance, arrest more people, and take additional repressive measures; which might lead to excesses.

Within the FIS itself, we may see the emergence of a multitude of factions and new leaders—some of whom will be tempted to pursue the path of violence and terrorism.

The thousands of FIS militants currently imprisoned in the Saharan camps built for this purpose will only become more ideologically rigid and nurse dreams of revenge, since the regime cannot keep them imprisoned indefinitely. What will they do once they are released?

Faced with these potential dangers, what can the regime do? It would seem essential to implement economic reform as rapidly as possible, if only to engender a sense of hope among the thousands of underprivileged Algerians now devoted to the FIS.

But here again, weaknesses appear. First of all, such reforms take time and money, and they require united leadership. In fact, however, the leadership does not seem to be exactly of one mind. The relations between Mr. Boudiaf and Mr. Ghazali seem rather fragile.

In an interview published Thursday by the Arabic daily AL-SALAM, Mr. Boudiaf said the latest shake-up “did not correspond to the changes expected,” explaining that it was impossible to “reverse everything in the space of a month.” This excuse is only half-convincing. Algeria's new president knows real reform cannot be carried out by the same men who were in charge of the system that led the country to disaster. He cannot afford to compromise himself in forming his ministerial team.

President Boudiaf knows too that he stands alone. He has no party, no trade union behind him. All he has going for him are his past, his integrity, and the 20 years he spent in exile for his refusal to compromise. But that is not enough. The army has its own vision of things: By virtue of its mind-set and instincts, its interests are still tied to the old system. So it is not 100-percent loyal. What President Boudiaf means by his constant assertions that he is “nobody's prisoner” is that he is not a hostage of the army.

But the truth is, he is in power only on the army's sufferance. To free himself completely, he needs his own drive belt. One possibility is the “Democratic National Rally” [RND] currently envisaged by the regime. According to Boudiaf, the RND might “establish the framework for solving both the democratic question and the country's problems. The RND could thus open the way to the appearance of groups able to co-exist with their divergent views.”

It remains to be seen what forces would constitute the backbone and foundation of this RND. Of course, one element might be the Association of Former Mujahidin. But that is not enough. It also remains to be seen whether the army will accept the emergence of such a force, which—unlike the FLN [National Liberation Front party]—would not be bound to it by ties of fealty.

In the meantime, the dissolution of the FIS has led Cheikh Mohamed Sahnoun, president of the “Daawa,” to create a “Front of Solidarity With the FIS” that brings together Ben Khedda, prime minister of the GPRA [Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic] and president of the “Al Oumma” Islamist movement, Mr. Abderrahman Kiouane, one of the founders of that party, and Mr. Ahmed Ben Mohamed, president of the Party of Mohammedan and Contemporary Algeria (PAMC).

The Islamist “Annahda” movement headed by Cheikh Abdellah Djaballah has denounced the dissolution of the FIS, which he said “does not solve the problems Algerian society is experiencing or the political and economic crisis from which the country is suffering.”

Thus the dissolution serves to strengthen the already existing bonds between the various factions of the Islamist movement—deepening the fissure between the latter and the regime.

At the same time, the dissolution has been condemned by secular parties such as the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces]. The latter declared, in a communique issued Wednesday evening, that it does “not accept the dissolution of a party occurring under the irregular circumstances of a state of emergency, hasty judicial proceedings, the absence of transparency and public information, and with the evident intent of justifying repressive measures already taken and yet to come.” It also asserted “that politics requires dialogue, and it rejects both the police state and the fundamentalist state.”

Former president Ben Bella said: “This decision solves nothing. It pushes the militants of FIS and its numerous sympathizers toward other lines of action... What has just happened in Algeria is serious (...) and threatens to tear society apart,” adding: “The FIS is a thermometer: They have broken the thermometer, but without attacking the underlying causes of the malady.” Ben Bella also exhorts President Boudiaf to “take immediate steps to attack the problem of massive corruption... The disease ravaging society cannot be cured simply by suppressing the FIS.”

But attacking corruption means attacking the notables from the old regime—the same people who make up the backbone of the new regime.

Mr. Abdelhamid Mehri, secretary general of the FLN, espouses a very similar position, opining that dissolution of the FIS will not solve the problems Algeria faces.

The same tone comes through in statements by the honorary president of the Algerian Human Rights League (LAHD), Mr. Miloud Brahim, who says “dissolving the FIS will not by itself resolve the problems that engendered it.”

The deeper reasons are economic and financial. The Algerian economy is ailing, and the remedies proposed thus far do not seem sufficient. Thus the president of the Algerian Employers Confederation (CAP, the biggest organization representing the interests of private-sector businessmen in Algeria) said on Monday that Sidi Ahmed Ghazali's recovery plan “was too timorous” and “not bold enough.” As he told *LA TRIBUNE DE L'EXPANSION*, “we have problems with several of the economic aspects, beginning with the role of the state in the economy.”

“It seems implicit in this plan that statal structures must be the basic engine of development. That is a view we do not share,” he said, adding: “With the external trade regime kept as it now is, losses will continue to be sustained by the public-sector enterprises, and worst of all the situation will not be any better by 1994 or the year 2000.”

This position, which reflects serious misgivings on the part of the private sector, will not make the task of the Algerian Government any easier: The regime was counting on this sector to stimulate the economy and create jobs to resorb at least some of the thousands of unemployed youths that constitute the bulk of FIS adherents and sympathizers.

President Boudiaf is in a terrible race against the clock, and the time at his disposal may have been shortened by dissolution of the FIS, because now he must pursue the fight against the latter—by repressive means where necessary—while trying to rebuild an almost ruined economy. These twin objectives may turn out to be incompatible, even apart from the obstacles certain to be raised by those still emotionally committed to the old regime—and such people are still to be found throughout the various branches of the state, even in the government.

Tally of FIS Arrests, Deaths Since November

*92AF0591A Algiers EL WATAN in French
13-14 Mar 92 p 2*

[Unattributed article: “Toll of the Clashes: 103 Dead and 6,786 Arrested”]

[Text] The clashes that have occurred since unrest began last November have resulted in 103 deaths and 414 wounded, according to the latest tally made public Thursday by the Minister of the Interior, Larbi Belkheir. The security forces sustained 31 deaths and 141 wounded, the minister stated at a press conference in Algiers.

Furthermore Mr. Belkheir announced that 6,786 persons had been interned in five centers located in the south of the country.

Furthermore some 500 detainees at the Reggane center run by the army could be released in the near future following their transfer on Tuesday to a civilian police center.

On television Tuesday evening, Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali had stated that a certain number of detainees would be released before the end of Ramadan.

The Minister of the Interior and Localities stated that as of 10 March, 6,786 people had been placed in the seven security centers that had opened since the imposition of the state of emergency; and 2,217 had been tried, 1,420 of whom had been under committal orders, 76 on bail, and 36 minors set free.

The Minister of the Interior stated that the centers at Reggane (3,004 people), Ouargla (2,133), In Salah (1,000), Bordj Omar Driss (641), and El Homr in the wilaya of Adrar (8) were involved. The centers at El Meneaa and Ain M'Guel (Tamanresset) were not.

Mr. Belkheir emphasized that among the detainees there were neither women nor minors. Of the 6,786 people subjected to internment, 101 are elected members of [Governorate] Popular Assemblies (APW) and 528 elected members of People's [Communal] Assemblies (APC). On the other hand, four APW members were tried, one of whom was under a committal order, and 39 APC members, 23 of whom were put in jail.

Possibility of Mob Rule Analyzed

*92AF0498A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
13-19 Feb 92 p 9*

[Article by Fatiha Akeb: “Tongue on the Trigger”—first paragraph is ALGERIE ACTUALITE introduction]

[Text] There's something worse than a Kalashnikov: a frenzied mob, deaf to all reason....

Are Algerians armed to the teeth? The question had to be posed, in light of press headlines about “armed Islamist bands” and assaults on barracks installations. Something no one has seen since the Soumaa affair and the Bouiali insurgency.

Is there cause for panic in the fact that a few obscure networks are probably supplying arms to equally obscure movements for possible trench warfare? The figures given out by the police are comforting enough. One must go very far back in time, to the early 1970's, to find evidence of illegal arms trafficking on a really large scale. At that time, there was no legal bar to opening a hunting gun assembly plant. An enormous shipment of parts arrived in Algiers destined for a fictitious plant. The ruse was discovered, the file was closed, and since then the law has prohibited such plants. The state started handling imports for the arms makers. But it has quit doing so in the last 3 or 4 years.

Hunting guns, classified as luxuries, are subject to very high tariffs. It costs 4 million centimes to clear a gun worth

3,000 French francs [Fr] through customs. There is a black market for hunting guns. Prices depend on the brand. Most prized are "Winchesters" and "Herstals" of Belgian origin, which may run as high as 20 million [centimes]. Even second-hand ones cost at least 4 million. Automatic pistols ("PA's") vary between 5,000 and 20,000 dinars. A PA can be purchased legally, in France for example, for Fr1,000. There has been a surge in applications for permits to buy or import guns. But since the state no longer imports any, even would-be buyers with permits have to resort to the black market. Some 34,000 Algerians legally own a hunting gun. Emigres are allowed to import this type of gun. They cannot legally transfer it until three years after date of purchase.

The black market for arms is biggest in regions with large numbers of immigrants, and of course in the south. Oued Souf, Ouargla and M'sila are the hottest spots for arms trafficking. In 1990, for example, police in M'Sila discovered a consignment of 116 alarm guns, firearms that are supposed to be noisy but not very destructive. But local craftsmen altered them to make them more powerful. In 1991, according to figures from the Criminal Investigation Department, 106 individuals were implicated in gun smuggling. Some 238 automatic pistols were seized, as well as 53 hunting guns and 3,026 ammunition cartridges.

The southern border is a problem, owing to its nature and vast size. Arms flow in from Libya, Mali, Niger. Algeria's air and sea approaches are relatively easier to police. Physical searches and baggage-scanning procedures have curbed arms smuggling. Coastal waters are also kept under close surveillance.

So much for statistics. The Criminal Investigation Department scoffs at the very idea that armed organizations exist: According to the department, in fact, the barracks attacks to procure guns just go to show that "armed bands" have failed to establish themselves. From Soumaa to the Guemmar affair, the main objective was always guns. That means those intent on pursuing the path of armed struggle lack the arms to do so. It also means they have failed to obtain guns from abroad. In cases where attacks on barracks have resulted in the theft of a few weapons, the guns in question were generally recovered. In the Soumaa affair, everything but one submachine-gun was recovered, and the latter was believed to have been abandoned in the wadi by a militant involved in the "Bouiali affair." The attacks on the gendarmerie barracks at Beni Mered and Guemmar reportedly netted only two Kalachnikovs, one FSA [semi-automatic rifle] and two PA's, which are still in circulation.

Although law enforcement officials are concerned about several minuscule groups, such as "El hidjra ou tekfir" (currently quiescent), these bands have yet to distinguish themselves by any "notable feats of arms," despite the "Afghan-guerrilla" air they affect, particularly in their ostentatious, trendy looking garb. Even the existence of the so-called "Afghan network" seems mostly a media fabrication, since there is no sign of significant numbers in the field. There is a vague rumor that a dozen Algerians have

died "over there." How? No one knows. Is there a training camp for Algerians who return to put their "skills" to use for political action? It's not clear. But mandatory national military service is the best place to learn how to handle weapons. So it is likely that those who set out for Afghanistan first received training as conscripts in the national army.

There are also vague rumors about a Saudi businessman who sends "recruiters" out to find young volunteers for Afghanistan. And it is rumored many of these young men never get farther than Pakistan and end up in Peshawar after a journey that takes them everywhere but to a mujahidin camp. Still, they have attracted attention, since some of those involved in such incidents as the robberies attempted by the ephemeral Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) at the Hussein-Dey station and the Constantine depot had previously served in Afghanistan. Likewise, the word "Afghanistan" was bruited about widely at the time of the attack on the Guemmar barracks. One name has achieved some notoriety: "Tayeb El Afghani," the presumed leader of the group. There is probably something to all this, but to call it a "network" seems an exaggeration.

There is not much evidence either for the so-called "unmarked cars" which—perhaps more than all the rumored "networks"—have sowed panic and uncertainty about the possession and utilization of weapons. The fact none of these cars has fallen into the hands of the authorities has added to the impact of the barracks attacks on the public. The unmarked cars have stirred up so much speculation that they have been linked to every subsequent act of violence. Wrongly. But the stories have never been put to rest. A gray [Peugeot] 405, formerly blue and later white, was abandoned somewhere because it was spotted; police suspect it was used by the MIA. This is the only evidence for a phenomenon that marked the turbulent events of October and June.

This is not the only unresolved question about the 1988 upheavals. But one thing has since become clear: A number of people are looking for guns. They are attacking barracks to get them. In general, police stations are not arms depots, which is probably why the barracks are targeted in the attacks. Who's doing it? A political party? According to the DGSN [Directorate General of National Security], there is no proof leaders of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] are responsible.

In short, guns are not to be found and purchased at every street corner. But all one need do is look around on Fridays (which have become troubling and tense occasions) to understand that the real problem is more one of mobs and their reactions than of firearms possession. The power of the FIS has never depended on its "armed branches" but on a very broad base, highly motivated and galvanized by violent rhetoric. It was surely not on the basis of the FIS's firepower that Abassi Madani asked ironically last June: "What can they [the army] do with their tanks?" It was on the basis of a mass following, which gave proof of its loyalty every Friday. He knew, probably from study of the social sciences, that "the mob is an indomitable and blind

force, able to surmount every obstacle, move mountains, or destroy the work of centuries." In October 1988, a mob coursed through the streets in search of an ideal, a goal, a leader, a faith. It found a frail young man with a booming voice who already had a pulpit: the mosques. He spoke to people's hearts as only an irrational zealot can do. He channeled the anger of October into support for Abassi Madani. Both were rapidly overwhelmed by the numbers. What they have is an amorphous mob, not an organized cadre of militants.

Yes, a mob...and what shall one do with it? Two things, according to the principles of mob psychology: Find a leader who has emerged from their midst, and govern them by playing on their emotions.

This is the only weapon the FIS has utilized—and the most dangerous. As Shakespeare said, "'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind." But sometimes it is hard to tell who are the real fools.

Hocine Ait Ahmed Comments on Boudiaf, Party Status

92AF0488A Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI in Arabic 21 Feb 92 p 7

[Interview with Hocine Ait Ahmed, leader of the Algerian Socialist Forces Front, by Mahmud Ma'ruf and Mustafa al-'Iraqi; place and date not given]

[Text] [AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Hocine Ait Ahmed—how does he evaluate the Algerian scene?

[Ait Ahmed] The current Algerian scene is the product of a succession of developments that began in the middle of last year, and more specifically in June, when the state of emergency was declared. We believe it has helped aggravate the problems of Algerian society and has impeded its democratic course. We stated at the time that previous events cost the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] considerable influence and goodwill and that declaring a state of emergency would restore that FIS to validity. But Sid Ahmed Ghazali (head of government), was after the presidential nomination and dealt all his cards in a number of pre-election initiatives, including the law-and-order plan he presented to the People's Council and which signalled the return of the army and the law on fuels and funds, whose objective was to whitewash funds stolen from the treasury.

Their scare tactics to frighten the people of the consequences of a parliamentary majority by the FIS were part of a plan to undermine democracy, since our society, by virtue of its composition and development, cannot tolerate the Iranian model.

The most important benefit of the first round of elections was that it eliminated the parties created by the government in order to ravage democracy, and articulated the people's wish to build a model dissimilar to that imposed upon it for 30 years.

Those are important milestones on our democratic course, whose objective is to change the system in a basic and fundamental way, albeit gradually and democratically. We

[consequently] called for a demonstration on 2 January as a signal to stop the wave of desperation and resignation and to induce the 5 million who had not voted to head for the polls. It was also meant as a response to those who called for the cancellation of the elections and for army intervention, underscoring an odd situation. How can a democratic element call upon the army to annul democracy under the guise of protecting it?

We believed then, and we still do, that a parliamentary majority by the FIS would not endanger democracy as long as the president of the republic exercised his far-reaching authority, which allows him to safeguard democracy and dissolve the People's Council, should it reject some bill.

Had the incidents of 11 January not targeted democracy, they would not have been able to intervene until the FIS violated the rights of society. But the problem is that the rulers, [as evidenced] by the incidents of June 1991 and January 1992, believe neither in the transfer of power nor in the march of democracy. They exploited apprehension over fundamentalism as a pretext, or an excuse, to stagnate democracy. Indeed, certain agents of the regime aided the fundamentalist victory in order to prepare the political climate for the coup.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] You say rulers. It is common knowledge that the presidents are the centers of power in the third world. Since President Chadli Bendjedid was removed, who, then, are those "rulers"?

[Ait Ahmed] Those who carried out the operation, specifically the army and the political [secret] police, which returned in force following the incidents of last June. It seems to me that Chadli Bendjedid incurred the wrath of that apparatus when he dissolved it in September 1990. With the June incidents, the political police was given back its role and it has regained its powers since. The diplomatic corps in Algiers would attest to the return of that agency.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Does this mean that the rulers are those who rule through the Higher State Council?

[Ait Ahmed] The same apparatus has ruled us since independence. Even the Liberation party [National Liberation Front, FLN], as the ruling party, was in the hands of those rulers and a part of those apparatuses. The FLN merely handled administration. I recall that I said, when on trial in 1965, that power that seems to be exercised by a sole party is not authority at all, since the party is nothing but a cloak of propriety for the many groups on the provincial level, and others. The Supreme State Council told me "maybe in the future, but right now, real power is in the hands of those who orchestrated the coup."

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Are you still confident, in light of recent Algerian developments, that the ballot boxes will lead to a change in government?

[Ait Ahmed] I am positive of it and believe in it. This will be accomplished if we glean from history, learn a lesson

from what happened, and form an impartial government composed of respected elements in Algeria; and if we re-examine electoral laws.

We have suggestions for ending the current crisis. First, to install a government for the purpose of electing a constituent council that would draft an election law based on [demographic] proportionality and constitutionality, because this is the only way out of the crisis and would restore confidence in the polls.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] In order for the polls to rule, civilian society must have reached a degree of development that would help it withdraw authority from the centers of power. Has Algerian society reached that stage?

[Ait Ahmed] I can say that the Algerian people is more mature than its rulers and that attempts at deception and misinformation will not succeed in depriving the people of democracy, despite the harshness of the apparatuses; that is, provided that we ensure honest elections.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Will you [meaning the FFS] take part in the consultative council that will be formed?

[Ait Ahmed] We have no knowledge of such a council, which proves that there was no consultation at all. According to hearsay, such a council would represent individuals and not parties. On what basis, then, would we participate? In what body? What form will it take and what role will it play? We are a political party and we must be consulted about all of that.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Why did you refuse to attend a meeting with President Mohamed Boudiaf prior to the state of emergency?

[Ait Ahmed] Because we boycotted it. We were initially invited as a delegation to be apprised, like other parties, of the security measures adopted by the Higher Council. Then they said no, only one person [may attend] and consequently, we opted not to. To us as a party, this was a question of honor and political respect. We regret the absence of dialogue and realize that there is no emerging from this crisis without a dialogue.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] With Mohamed Boudiaf—You disagreed with the regime in the early 1960s, and each of you went his own way. As of 14 January, Boudiaf has led the government and you have headed the opposition in civilian society. What does Hocine Ait Ahmed think of Mohamed Boudiaf? What sort of relationship do you have with him today?

[Ait Ahmed] I have not met him since his return to Algeria, and there has been no contact. However, I used to meet him whenever I visited Morocco. I recall that I met him in November 1985—in the presence of the late brother 'Ali Msili, may God have mercy on him—to convince him of the need to unify] the figures of the revolution. We were preparing for a press conference in London with Ahmed Ben Bella. I suggested that Boudiaf join us for that conference, but he said at the time that he was willing to issue a

joint communique only with me, but not with Ben Bella. I had good relations with him and we must sustain these relations, because they may be of service to the country someday.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] What would you do if you were [residing] outside Algeria, had no party or front, and received the same offer that was made to Boudiaf?

[Ait Ahmed] It is not possible to make a judgment. This is no time for psychoanalysis. The point is, there is an apparatus called the Higher State Council, which is not legitimate. The legitimacy issue must first be resolved, because it has to do with the future of our country and because it is essential for restoring the people's self-confidence and for reviving trust between the people and [government] institutions, and between Algeria and international society.

We cannot solve our social and economic problems without a return to the course of democracy. Despite officials' statements to the contrary, I am afraid that the parties will be paralyzed by the state of emergency, as proven by the banning of a seminar titled "The Political, Economic, and Social Crisis: What Is The Way Out?" which was sponsored by our party and scheduled for 12-13 February in Algiers. The ban shows that those in power do not believe in plurality or democracy.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] The absence of contact—is it between the Higher State Council and the FFS, or is it between Mohamed Boudiaf and Hocine Ait Ahmed?

[Ait Ahmed] I don't know, but I believe that we are out of favor with the rulers because we use simple and sincere words. A coup took place on 11 January and we called it a coup. This is what disturbs them, but we constantly reiterate that our political activity is rooted in reality and in truth, no matter the cost. [It is also rooted] in enlightenment, reason, education, and logic.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Recent elections have differentiated the fronts to varying degrees—the Islamic Salvation Front, the Socialist Forces' Front, and the National Liberation Front. Those fronts, which lost out to subsequent events, are yet to show signs of cooperation among themselves.

[Ait Ahmed] I find it important to first point out the failure of small parties that were of no consequence to society but were [created] as part of the regime's bid to break the parties and undermine democracy through intensified clamor and confusion, especially informationally, which make those parties appear more substantial than they were.

The map is now clear. Society is truly influenced by the three fronts. As for cooperation among them, things aren't that simple. There has been a quasi-relationship with the FIS since last June, when they were pursued by the regime and took refuge in the villages and mountains where we have a presence but where they have no influence. We welcomed them on the condition that they refrain from

misinformation. After the resignation of Chadli Bendjedid, we met with a FIS delegation to urge them to control their supporters and party centers in order to avoid violence and bloodshed, which I cannot tolerate. I would much rather flee Algeria than live in a climate where the young are sacrificed. The meeting lasted more than one and a half hours, during which we criticized the position of their strugglers during the election campaign. They attempted deception in many electoral constituencies. We told them that we would not tolerate misinformation and that we have repeatedly proven the futility of their misinformation against us. We told them, in order to avoid conflict between us: Either you are ignoring your own precepts and are violating them, or there are FIS practices that you cannot control. This is dangerous, especially as all kinds of people congregate at places of worship and as some of your cells have been infiltrated by the political police.

At any rate, the dialogue was so sharp that they inquired if the 2 January demonstration was directed against them or against the government! We told them that we are middle-of-the-roads, opposed to police rule but also opposed to a fundamentalist republic. They asked what we meant by fundamentalism, and we responded that [we view it as] the Iranian model, i.e., the totalitarianism of oppression and torture, since we are committed to the separation of religion and politics and to insulate places of worship from the political game, i.e., tricks, squabbling, and maneuvering. This is where we differ with the FIS.

It is a different story with the FLN, since no party can ally with it without incurring the wrath of the masses. It is possible, however, to arrive at a minimum understanding with it, such as on allowing matters to develop peacefully; quietly, in other words.

There is a point of contention with the FIS that has to be pointed out. They blame us for advocating a constituent council and [claim that] we abandoned our call for a return to an electoral course. Our position is that one should not turn back to an old story, [especially if that] return is no longer possible. Our concern at the moment is to go to the heart of the matter and resolve the key issues of legitimacy and installing a constitution in our country. Alliances and cooperation are difficult because of the disparity of targets and strategies.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] This is the third anniversary of the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA].

[Ait Ahmed] The lack of democracy and populism in the institutions of that union underscore the impairment of those institutions on its third anniversary. The crises of Maghreb countries can only be resolved through democracy. The failure of the official vision for uniform Maghreb action has been proven day after day since the 1960s. This is why we always call for action by the civilian societies of those countries, for intensifying our contacts [with each other], and for recalling our common tradition of fighting imperialism.

We demand the formation of a Maghreb parliament to be directly elected by the people; of a fully-vested social, economic, and cultural council; and of a Maghreb tribunal for human rights. The fight for those goals would be a gain even if all of them are not accomplished.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] You are part of a minority that refuses to call the Maghreb Arab.

[Ait Ahmed] Because it needs no qualification. Arab causes are our causes, but the Maghreb must not perpetuate the malignment and denial of certain cultures. It must be a democratic Maghreb.

Rationale for Belkheir, Guechi, Djoudi Discussed
 92AF0516A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
 27 Feb 92 pp 4-5

[Article by Fatiha Akeb]

[Text] Only three ministers remain from the ancien regime: Ghazali, Belkaid and Belkheir. However, journalists have pointed out to the head of the government that his shake-up did not give the impression "of a radical break." They did not name names, but it is clear that Larbi Belkheir, currently Minister of the Interior, was the one who was targeted. All the more so, since his name is inextricably linked to that of former President Chadli.

Their relationship goes back a long time. They came from the same graduating class. Belkheir benefited from several appointments under Chadli's reign. He was promoted to general in July 1985, then in August that same year he became secretary general of the presidency. In 1986 the Chief of State named him director of his Cabinet, a post that did not exist before Belkheir came to the presidency. It seemed at the time that all political dossiers passed through him. Discreet and efficient, it was said, he was spared the events of October, which spattered mud on politicians. But he was not spared from rumor. On that issue, he responds to the press: "They say so many things about me..." One thing is certain, he has been close and faithful to Chadli. What is less clear is whether Belkheir, like Guechi and Nait Djoudi, has in his own way also been a dissident. He fell into disgrace for three years, because he had been too reticent in responding to the way Chadli managed the affairs of state. He even refused to execute some orders, and showed his disagreement with several initiatives of the President's in-laws. In short, Chadli felt that his faithful friend and close adviser would no longer completely approve his acts and gestures. A military officer, he undoubtedly plays an important role: he was present in every action leading to Chadli's resignation. That break probably weighed heavily on the overall relationship. But it is also said with increasing frequency that Belkheir is effective in his current position.

The head of the government, who has been reproached for not completely accepting responsibility for the break, responds with this question: "What radical change has occurred, and for how long?" He places in context the effect of the new faces and the psychological shock that resulted from the change: "Even if we admit that the whole

Government was party to it, will the problems be resolved?" He himself should have resigned, after the first round, he says, because the elections were neither "clean nor honest." But was that feasible? When Boudiaf accepted the sacrifice, how could others refuse it? If Boudiaf had been convinced to put his hand into the pie, which did not seem at all easy to penetrate, Ghazali could have done no less. But he admits categorically, despite "the FIS" [Islamic Salvation Front] trickery," that the results of the first round cannot be appealed: It was "a complete rejection requiring, at the minimum, a radical change." It is true that Ghazali had stated it and proclaimed it even before Chadli's departure. Viewed from that angle, the radical change has already somewhat taken place. For the rest, he concluded simply that "one must judge on the terrain..." Furthermore, at the very time when the FIS dossier had been set aside for the courts, for its eventual dissolving, the government shelters within its ranks two members of the Islamic movement. Why not? asks Ghazali, who explains that this government, despite recent events, does not aim "to fight the Islamic movement within a Muslim country." The misunderstanding is very serious if some have perceived it that way.

Ghazali, then, makes this necessary clarification. Said Guechi's choice is significant, because he is a dissident not in terms of his convictions, but rather with respect to the FIS leaders, whose policies and strategies he rejects. In effect, Said Guechi, founding member of the FIS, the idea of which was conceived by him, quit the Majliss Echoura in May 1991 to protest the policies and the indefinite strike Abassi Madani was preparing. He was also, after the arrest of the FIS leaders, the organizer of the Batna meeting to try to return a more homogenous and politicized leadership to the FIS. Hachani and those close to Abassi turned the situation to their favor. Said Guechi left the Batna meeting before its conclusion. Later, when the FIS dragged the legitimacy issue to the summit, it was led by none other than the Hachani Provisional Bureau, which was contested by founders including Guechi. Even the Government found itself in a jam, as it no longer knew to which faction to address itself in a dialogue with the FIS. It is useless to emphasize that already at that time, to prevent the FIS from growing beyond the constitutional limits, the government had wanted Guechi and not Hachani to take over the party reins. It perhaps then would not have been obliged, some months later, to send the FIS dossier to the courts. Said Guechi's choice also means that a certain conception of the FIS, as held by its former leaders, is definitively buried. Algeria will not return to its original conception of recognizing the Islamists' right of political existence. Naming Said Guechi to the summit confirms that the failure is the FIS' rather than that of the Islamic movement. HAMAS and al-Nahdah have let it be understood that they have not been touched by the dissolution measure, which only concerns the FIS. But it needs to be said that the FIS base, as it exists, will probably not seesaw between one or the other of the two parties.

Thus, if the FIS is dissolved, and there is strong possibility that that will occur, it is preferable that that base be recognized in a man like Said Guechi, and he is preferable

for the government, under these conditions, as an intermediary to take up contact again with that base. In sum, to assist democracy and the Islamic movement to become established without too much expense, it is perfectly correct and advantageous for the authorities to have Said Guechi in the Government. He has been marginalized and dragged through the mud by the FIS leaders, but the closeness of the Government and the means put forward to reestablish order, will leave no alternative other than the Islamic movement to choose the future of its leaders, less in the case of the precedent-setting trials than in that of the politicians. Said Guechi is offered as a model and he is willing. But is he a democrat? Ghazali replies: "No party is, for the time being. It is a question of time..."

In addition to Ghazali, an FLN [National Liberation Front] dissident because of a misunderstanding with the current leadership, Belkheir, who himself broke with Chadli at the point of falling into disgrace, and Said Guechi, who had broken with Abassi Madani, there is a fourth dissident, Hachemi Nait Djoudi, who is also with the party. Boudiaf has clearly extended his hand to all Algerians without exception, including both "the Islamists" and the Berber movement. Nait Djoudi discretely looked the other way. In a break with the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces] leader, this surgeon was a founding member of the Human Rights League, for which he imprisoned El Harrach, accused by the State Security Court of plotting against the regime in 1985. His choice means, in the FFS leader's view, that "democracy requires a consensus around the afterthoughts." The authorities seem to give the FFS leader more afterthoughts than are necessary. Mistrust is the term that undoubtedly best describes the relations between Mr. Ait-Ahmed and the authorities. Reciprocal mistrust.

Three names then, each of them famous in their way, give a sense of the Ghazali government. The head of the government probably is correct in putting into context the impact of the psychological shock "of a radical break." Not only because the problems will not be forcefully resolved with a government formed exclusively of new faces, but also because the people in the streets are accustomed to the departure and changing of ministers without any effect whatsoever. Frankly, that will allow a bit of time to be gained. But this game is no longer fun nor effective. The people in the streets might permit themselves a semblance of detachment on their choice of men. It is the streets that, in recent times, have blessed them or thrown them into the dustbin of history. Furious, the people in the street have launched bloody appeals, too close together in time to hope that the authorities might finally be given the best definition of what is a "radical break."

Moralizing the State's political habits really requires greater effort than a mere shuffling of new faces.

Ramadan Said Ripe To Increase Tensions
92AF0537A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French
5-11 Mar 92 p 35

[Article by Jamza Kaidi: "Algeria: No Truce in Sight; Ramadan Replete With Danger"]

[Text] It is a month marked by piety, but by all manner of tensions as well. This year, Ramadan begins on 5 or 6 March, depending on the country. Perhaps more than other people making up the Ummah [community], the Algerians will have a rather troubled Ramadan because of events their country has endured since the end of December 1991.

There are no grounds for believing that the main protagonists (the Army and the Islamists) will conclude a truce on this occasion; quite the contrary. The latter will exploit the atmosphere during this month of meditation to step up propaganda. Every mosque is a potential platform during the *tarawih* (evening prayer). The many commemorations (revelations from the Koran, the Muslims' entry into Mecca, the martyrdom of Imam Ali, and so on) will constitute as many perfect opportunities for effectively recalling their cause and without resorting to incendiary speeches. This will even be true of mosques taken over by the authorities.

During this season of the year, Algerian cities are bustling at night. By gaining control of the municipalities in June 1990, the FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation] tried repeatedly to "legally" oppose the organization of many celebrations during the month of Ramadan. More than once, speeches by mayors backed by many faithful nearly degenerated into confrontations.

The Islamist movement will not be able to repeat any similar operation this year, but who can guarantee that the "Afghans," who so far have only attacked security forces, will not go after those who engage in forbidden pleasures (singing and dancing)? Such action, difficult to stop, would indeed do damage to their popularity, but could create a climate of psychosis and fear that would serve their cause better than mere manifestations of support.

Other dangers also lie in wait for this country where breaks in supplies and shortages of essential products are the daily fare. The distribution of commodities by government stores can turn into riots and lead to the worst as a result of the combined tensions of fasting and events.

What will happen if law enforcement agencies, quick on the trigger of late, should intervene to break up crowds gathering at shops?

The picture is fortunately not so gloomy. A credit of \$300 million released by Italy at the beginning of February comes just in time. It will cover the need for semolina, noodles, and other foodstuffs throughout Ramadan. For the time being, market stalls are well-supplied, but the constantly changing price tags scare away many customers.

While the people can still afford bread and semolina, the same cannot be said of the rest of the basic foodstuffs. A kilo of sweet peppers costs from 120 to 160 Algerian dinars, 30 to 40 French francs, equivalent to 1.2 to 1.6 days of work for a worker earning the interoccupational minimum growth wage. Fresh tomatoes cost from 15 to 30 dinars, cucumbers 80 (six hours of work for the same worker).

Meat is a luxury item, with mutton costing 195 dinars a kilo at street markets and steak 260 dinars (2.6 days of work for our worker). It is a luxury which many management employees cannot afford on a daily basis.

Subsidy

Low-quality oil is sold at government stores for 20 dinars a liter, but lines are long and consumers must bring containers (bottles or cans) because there are none available.

Even locally produced fruit has for years been affordable only for the rich. A kilo of bananas costs 180 dinars, apples cost from 100 to 140 dinars, and strawberries 480.

Displays are crammed with imported goods, but prices are discouraging: preserves in jars, 300 dinars; instant coffee, 450 dinars for 200 grams! Nevertheless, there are still buyers and smugglers are doing a lively business.

In such a situation, assuaging one's hunger and that of one's relatives after a 17-hour fast becomes a real feat!

Could this be the reason why Ghazali's government, acting ahead of schedule, ordered that a subsidy be granted to all households whose monthly income is 7,000 dinars or less? It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this measure, the terms of which must still be defined. It also remains to be seen whether the country's runaway inflation will cancel out the measure before it is even put into effect!

In the meantime, Ramadan approaches inexorably and, given the times in which we now live, a month is a period as long as it is laden with risks!

Ghozali's Privatization Plan Criticized

92AF0572A Algiers EL WATAN in French
10 Mar 92 p 1

[Article by Arezki Benmokhtar: "Privatization of Public Enterprises: Hostility to the Ghozali Plan"]

[Text] The debate on the reorganization of enterprises is more lively than ever and turning into a power struggle. Managers in the state sector, members of the UNEP [National Union of State-Owned Enterprises] are raising the question again with increased insistence, and have frozen their participation in the three-party [agreement].

Mr. Benmansour, the UNEP chairman, said he would not compromise when it comes to giving priority to the reorganization of enterprises, and he charged the successive governments with incompetence.

As for the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA], it just stated that it would "oppose, through all means available under the law, any policy that would give up and sell off state-owned enterprises, to benefit the national or foreign private sector."

On the other hand, the Algerian Federation of Employers (CAP) considered that "the measures considered and the amount provided to that effect (over 420 billion dinars) cannot and should not under any circumstances provide

another excuse to reinforce the privileges rather than the convictions of a management oligarchy, or to take the easy way out and yield to the pressures of those for whom State subsidies are the best means to ensure the State's indefinite involvement in, and commitment to an economy that is stifled by its interventionism." The employers do not agree that the State should subsidize all state-owned enterprises, thus supporting Mr. Ghazali's position that some of these should be entrusted to the private sector.

Each party thus reaffirmed its position, leaving no room for compromise, and crippling the government and its recovery plan.

As a result, four years after the start of the reorganization of enterprises was undertaken in 1998, and after many plans were made and unmade by successive governments, the condition of these enterprises has not changed one bit.

Year after year, they have accumulated deficits as the dinar was devalued, bank interest rates rose, and wages increased with no corresponding rise in production, etc.

The total cost of the reorganization of enterprises rose from 80 billion dinars in 1988 to 400 billion dinars.

The figure is alarming at a time when the government is looking for additional financing to meet manufacturing and household needs.

Actually, of these 400 billion, close to 300 billion owed by enterprises to the Algerian Development Bank (BAD) and to the Treasury (and representing the assets of enterprises) and part of the bank overdraft (a total of 160 billion dinars owed to commercial banks) will be converted to equity securities and bonds on behalf of the Algerian Treasury.

However, contributions in fresh capital do not total 400 billion dinars. What are the reasons for the delay in implementing the reorganization, a delay that has increased the cost of the operation? What are political decisionmakers planning for the future?

Boudiaf Calls For Greater UGTA Participation

92AF0529B *Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French*
25 Feb 92 p 2

[Report on speech to workers by Mohamed Boudiaf, president of the High State Committee, on 24 February, by Salim Rebahi and Nora Chergui; place not given: "UGTA—a Force for Union and Solidarity"]

[Text] "For the first time in the history of independent Algeria, the union (UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers]) has been consulted in connection with the preparation of an economic recovery program. We will work to make that participation even greater in the future, and the state is prepared to include the union in all processes relative to the management of the country that it undertakes from now on." That was the principal message conveyed to the workers by President Mohamed Boudiaf.

The problems related to the world of labor, the situation being experienced by the country, the problems of young people, the role of the union, and above all the need to

institute dialogue and an atmosphere of confidence were the main points developed by Boudiaf during a lengthy speech marking his first meeting with the working masses. The president of the HCE [High State Committee] began his speech by paying tribute to all the workers, whom he described as the living force of the nation: "all revolutionary movements have been based on the working class and the peasants," he said.

In that context, Boudiaf said the reason that the UGTA had succeeded in perpetuating its principles and providing the revolution with constant support and fulfilled its mission in the stage of building the country was that it had drawn its inspiration from the people.

Discussing the union's role in society, the president of the HCE said that "the UGTA is a means of gathering together the working masses; it is the backbone of Algerian society, just as it remains an instrument for stability thanks to its aware rank and file and an instrument for change because the means of production are in the hands of the workers, who can use them to help or hurt the country."

Boudiaf went on to say that by putting all those qualities together, "one can say that as a free union born at the very center of the revolution for national liberation, the UGTA is a complete success and an undeniable achievement."

Concerning the situation that prevails in the country, Boudiaf admitted that Algeria was experiencing many problems. He said: "We are not afraid to say it, but let no one say that our problem lies in religion. Algeria is a Muslim country as far as its majority is concerned. If there is weakness in the country, the leaders take complete responsibility, not the people. But this does not mean looking back. The only solution is to avoid making the same mistakes again."

How can we respond to the challenge? he asked. "Our salvation lies in unity. Is it not said that in union is strength? And 1 November 1954 is proof of that." In Boudiaf's opinion, the success of such an operation requires a coming together of the leadership and the rank and file. And there must be an end to all marginalization. "All officials must draw closer to the rank and file. Those at the top must be close to the rank and file and must listen to the latter's problems and grievances. They must make dialogue their preferred tool."

In the opinion of the HCE president, that tool "will make it possible to banish violence, and the parties must make it their creed in the interest of the people."

On that subject, Boudiaf reiterated his call for the establishment of a national democratic and patriotic rally that must bring together all the living forces and particularly the young people, who are being appealed to by this means to help do something about their concern.

It should be noted that the issue of young people is a priority in the HCE's program. The president of the HCE said: "We must educate those young people and, above all, give them responsibility. They are Algeria's future. Our mission is to prepare those young people to take up the

torch." In conclusion, Boudiaf said that a patriotic spirit and defense of the country's interests must constitute our main driving force, and he urged the workers to become more aware and to make greater efforts to bring the country out of its crisis.

He said in substance that the workers must set an example and that their chief creed should be "work and always work."

Earlier, the secretary general of the central union, Abdelhak Benhamouda, made it a point in his opening speech to express the workers' pleasure at meeting a symbol of sincere nationalism and an initiator of the November Revolution. "The fact that we are celebrating 24 February today is simply proof that the UGTA works to strengthen the nationalist line in faithfulness to history," he added. In the opinion of the secretary general of the UGTA, that nationalist line means that the UGTA's only party is Algeria. "All those who defend that party and its interests can be sure of the workers' support," he said.

Concerning the workers, Benhamouda said that they were not asking for help and that they refused to be welfare recipients. But they are demanding protection by a strong state, namely that of the right that—and the workers are convinced of this—can materialize only if the UGTA is made a strong opposition group. He then said in conclusion that despite the multitude of problems with which the workers are struggling, they are ready to make sacrifices just as their elders did.

Last, it must be said that in this first contact between the country's new leadership and the workers, the two sides seemed to establish a rapport that bodes very well for Algeria.

Equality for Women Reportedly Still Unattained

92AF0558A Algiers *EL WATAN* in French
8 Mar 92 p 1

[Commentary by Tayeb Belghiche: "The Unloved"]

[Text] Algerians feel uncomfortable. Their environment is causing more than stress. They are rebellious, unwilling to accept the established order. As a result, they are easy prey to all the unscrupulous demagogues and charlatans that are ready to exploit their craving for justice. The emerging democracy has enabled them to express their pain, to shout their anger.

Yet, in this prevailing climate, one-half of Algeria gives the impression of being edged out, excluded from the democratic revolution that is taking place.

Whereas, before October 1988, we hypocritically celebrated woman's day every year, to make the world believe that we were not indifferent to her fate, things have now changed. Certainly, women's association struggle courageously—in an environment where misogyny is quite obvious—to obtain equality of rights between men and women, as proclaimed in the country's fundamental laws. Unfortunately, they have not been successful so far.

During recent election campaigns, even our so-called democratic parties, with very few exceptions, never breathed a word on the status of women; or rather some did. Those who mentioned women's "case" did so to expatiate upon reactionary concepts, to say shamelessly that Satan = woman.

Women, therefore, have every reason to fight, to struggle against the minority status that is imposed upon them.

For instance, how can one claim to be just and law abiding while tolerating a family code that is so unjust that it provides for the eviction of a woman and her children from their home after a divorce.

This aberration did not in the least revolt the God-fearing and the "democrats."

Men of law, supposed to protect male and female citizens against the excesses of society were not ashamed to advocate such a code.

Yet, during the liberation war, Algerian women proved that they were capable of leadership, if only certain taboos were eliminated.

On this 8 March, we unfortunately observe a regression in women's status; it is an injustice, one more, to the memory of all these Algerian women who died in the maquis, in the Casbah, or elsewhere so Algeria could become free.

Detainee Reports Experience in Detention Camp

92AF0559B Algiers *ALGERIE ACTUALITE* in French
5-11 Mar 92 p 17

[Article signed Dj. B.: "Jails: 13 Days Inside"—first paragraph is *ALGERIE ACTUALITE* introduction]

[Text] Halim was arrested by the police. He tells with some humor and considerable relief about his two weeks of detention in one of the famous "processing centers." A short tale.

He had a narrow escape. He laughs all the time. Nervously. Halim, 27, now has a story to tell to whomever wishes to listen.

As a joke, his friends told him that journalists from the *TIMES* were looking for him, for an interview. In his tale punctuated with little laughs, the same words keep recurring. "Slektelha, I was lucky." He spent 13 days as a detainee in a military center. The barracks of the Reserve Mobile Police Unit (GGRM). A Republican Guard (Haras-el-Djoumhour) unit based in Lido, near Pins Maritimes.

The barracks are now a so-called "processing center," a sort of transit camp where "situations" are being "investigated." The detainees are then released or sent to one of the security centers recently opened in the south of the country.

The story of Halim, our "survivor," could have been anybody's story.... He was arrested last month, at the time of the confrontations between the Islamic Salvation Front

[FIS] and the police. He was with some friends at Bordj El-Kiffan, the former Fort-de-l'Eau, or again "little Paris," as people there still like to call it, recalling that it used to be a village famous for its terraces covered with flowers, its kebabs, and its ice cream. One of his pals was tactless enough to shout at policemen who were patrolling in a radio car, a VR as they are called. Since he had done nothing, he did not run away. So they picked him up. He got his beating and today he is laughing about it. At the Dar El-Beida police station, where he was dragged, the officer in charge did not want him. After another police station also declared him "unwanted," they decided to send him back to his "district." He was handed over to the military. That's when he panicked; he kept shouting that he had not done anything, but no one listened. They just asked him to be quiet. He found himself in a [text illegible] a blanket and a straw mattress to sleep on. Huge hangars, and hundreds of young people like him. Scary....

There were many "bearded men," FIS militants, young people who [text illegible] in Darak-el-W [text illegible] Friday, when it was too late. But also guys like him, who did not know what they were doing there. "I soon gathered," he said, "that it was each for himself and God for all. The FIS militants, their kind words and their flowery language, that was a joke. If you had the bad idea to get up at night without taking your 'zaoura,' your blanket, with you, you were unlikely to see it again...." Laughter.

Freezing cold nights, dampness, and insomnia. A pain. Soon, Halim was called for questioning. "It was OK," he keeps repeating. When he appeared before the "examining commission," as he calls it, he was scared, really scared. Several officers were seated there, facing him. Civilians too. From the military security [SM] and a psychologist, he believes. But there was also a physician for the medical examination. "They kept asking questions, sometimes you didn't even have time to answer." Very pointed, precise questions: "What are your relations with the FIS?"; "What marches, 'massirates,' have you taken part in?" No brutality at all. Before asking questions, an officer started reciting: "Bismillah errahmane errahime, ouama baad...." "I saw young bearded men who could not believe their eyes; I think the officers did it on purpose, for the 'psychological effect'; the young men did not understand; were these really the 'taughianes,' the tyrants, the ungodly?"

"Actually, everything was OK; we were all expecting the worse, torture, but nothing happened. Young soldiers were talking to us, none without kindness. They were doing their jobs, that's all. All we needed was Nescafe for breakfast." Laughter....

Everyday, his blanket under his arm, Halim kept waiting at the gate. In a state of total uncertainty. Some were called and were taken no one knew where. So, every one was waiting for his turn. He was put on file, photographed. Just in case. He was even asked to sign a report, which he read before signing it. Like at the movies. One fine morning, they called him and threw him out. They told him he had

no business being here. Today, a free man, he laughs heartily at his misadventure. As he says, he had a narrow escape....

Life Inside Abraham Sarfaty Prison Described

92AF0572B Algiers EL WATAN in French
9 Mar 92 p 23

[Article by R. Benbouzid: "Moroccan Prisoners; Rabat Doesn't Want Them"]

[Text] The Abraham Sarfaty prison is unlike any other prison; in fact, it is unique: it does not have a gate and its inmates are free to come and go as they want.

There are nearly 60 of them, aged mostly 40 to 70. They are Moroccans and most of them are married.

The King of Morocco did not recognize them in 1989, when the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic [SDAR] released them after a period of peace. Recognizing Moroccan prisoners would amount to recognizing the Sahraoui State...in that case, better sacrifice a few individuals!

Small igloo-shaped rooms serve as dormitories; they are shared four ways by four people. They are dark and look gloomy and uninviting.

Yet, this is where the "inmates" prepare their dinner every day, and knead the bread they make with their semolina rations. As for lunch, it is prepared by the camp's cook.

The vacant stare of the "boarders" lights up at the sight of newcomers; it feels like a holiday. They surround us and bombard us with questions on the situation in their country first, and then in Algeria. They also ask for paper and pen to write. They have a striking desire to communicate.

How could it be otherwise: they have been there since 1978, 1976, and 1973?

One of them recalled: "Sahraoui soldiers caught me when I was on the border. I am not even a soldier. I am a civilian who left his 7-day-old son in 1976, the year I was arrested. I have never seen him since then. He is 16 now and does not know his father, although I am well and alive."

Two of the visitors, musicians, had a stroke of genius; they took out their instruments and started playing light rhythmic songs. The prisoners were surprised, tense. However, when one of them intrepidly stepped forward and started dancing, the atmosphere relaxed, some started clapping their hands; they were almost beaming.

The dancer in question is only 51 but looks 20 years older in spite of his (relative) "joie de vivre." He has lived at the camp since 1978. He invited us to his room, served tea, and offered us some of his "homemade" bread; but mostly he showed us pictures of his family, which has grown as years went by (daughters- and sons-in-law). He was quite proud of them and explained all their family ties.

However, despite the Red Cross efforts—which the prisoners say are inadequate—the prisoners have hardly any contact with the outside world. The only reliable method, which is used every time, is of course to hand over letters to foreign visitors who forward them from their respective countries.

How do these prisoners spend their days? A piece of land has been set aside for them, where they spend most of their time, tilling the soil and growing vegetables. But not matter how much satisfaction they derive from it, is that enough to make up for so many years without affection?

Efforts To Visit Family at Reggane Unsuccessful
92AF0591C Algiers EL WATAN in French 14 Mar 92
p 2

[Article from ALGERIE PRESSE SERVICE: "The Reggane Camp: The Detainees' Refusal..."]

[Text] This Thursday, on the sixth day of approved visiting to the Reggane security camp located 160 km south of Adrar, the several thousand detainees still persist in not receiving their families, which have come from various wilayas.

Much testimony points out that the detainees' "strike" has been organized as a sign of protest against certain arrests considered to be "arbitrary." Another version advances the hypothesis of a plan "hatched" by an "unidentified activist" group aimed at creating some form of scandal around the Reggane camp, thus compromising the state's authority.

A number of families have asked the military authorities to supply them with proof that it really is the detainees who have unilaterally refused contact. Exhibiting good will, the military authorities allowed one citizen delegated by the families to approach the detainees, held about three km from the visitors center, in a "Land Rover" vehicle.

Upon his return, this first "visitor" said he had seen hundreds of men although he had not had the opportunity to talk to them.

Other sources, when cross-checked, reported that three detainees were hospitalized this week at the Reggane hospital. They subsequently returned to the camp in very good health. They just had a benign case of diarrhea, they stated, citing medical sources.

This situation has begun to arouse the anger of all of these families who have come from so far away for nothing. "Why supply visitors passes if they turn out to be outdated in the end?", they ask as they point an accusing finger at the agencies of the wilaya of origin.

Conditions Inside Ouargla Camp; Journalists Pressured

92AF0546C Paris LE MONDE in French 11 Mar 92
p 5

[Article by Georges Marion: "Prison Conditions in Ouargla Camp Are 'Extremely Bad'"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Algiers—During a two-day visit to the Ouargla camp last weekend, the delegation from the LADH [Algerian Human Rights League] was able, apparently without constraint, to talk to all the prisoners who wanted to meet with it. None of the latter reported any violence within the camp, where everyone is able to move about freely. But many of them mentioned the brutality with which they were treated at the time of their arrests.

According to members of the delegation, 2,200 prisoners, including from 300 to 400 teachers, academics, and members of the liberal professions, are packed into the Ouargla camp, a former military establishment originally designed for some 700 people, where they are being guarded by soldiers. The youngest prisoner is 19 years old, and the oldest is 70 years old.

That overpopulation forced the authorities to hastily put up tents alongside the permanent buildings, which once housed a barracks and a prison. Denouncing the close quarters and lack of sanitation, the poor quality and small quantity of the food, and inadequate medical care—there are only six physicians, themselves prisoners, and an infirmary that lacks everything—the LADH reported that a great many prisoners did not know the reason for their internment. "Alongside those who know that they owe their situation to their membership in the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), there are others who are wondering why they are there," said the delegation's spokesman.

Arrested as they were getting out of bed or during nighttime roundups conducted throughout the country on the basis of police records, many prisoners were still, two weeks later, dressed only in their pajamas, waiting for their families to visit and bring them a change of clothes, and unaware of what was happening outside the camp. At first, some prisoners were taken before a judge. Upon being acquitted and released, they were immediately picked up for questioning and taken to the Ouargla camp where, like their comrades, they are being held without trial by virtue of the state of emergency declared on 9 February.

Although treated less dramatically, journalists are also beginning to be victims of the political context. At the conclusion of a recent general meeting called by the Association of Algerian Journalists (AJA), professional reporters also denounced the "intolerable pressure" and "legal harassment" to which editorial staffs were being subjected.

Although it often points to freedom of the press as proof that the democratic process is continuing, the new government has had no hesitation in letting it be known that it expects that freedom to be exercised within certain limits. First the Arabic and French newspapers of the FIS were banned for undermining the security of the state, and now it is the turn of the other print media to be the targets of legal action. At the beginning of March, the weekly EN NOUR, published in Constantine, was seized with no explanation. A week before that, an Islamic fundamentalist weekly called EVEIL suffered the same fate after publishing an article on the disturbances in the Algiers

Casbah, while the magazine EL MASAR EL MAGHREBI was withheld from circulation for a few hours so that authorities could check two articles "likely to undermine public order."

Journalists are not escaping the vigilance of the authorities. At the end of January, eight journalists for the daily newspaper EL KHABAR were questioned, kept in police custody, and in some cases charged following a raid on the newspaper's offices by the Gendarmerie. EL KHABAR had published an advertising insert containing an FIS communique calling on soldiers to oppose "the despots" (see LE MONDE, 24-25 January). Since then, several other journalists have suffered a similar fate. The most recent example: the legal action taken against the editor and a staff member of JEUNE INDEPENDANT for "undermining an official body" following their publication of an article mischievously headlined "State of Entrapment" [a pun on "state of siege"].

In this case the offending article, which appeared in a newspaper that is usually aggressive if not downright offensive, was as innocuous as anything could be, but that did not prevent its author from being held in police custody for 24 hours and then being the subject of a committal order. When the examining magistrate refused to jail the accused journalist, the prosecutor's office decided to appeal. Although the "major press" in general has so far avoided being taken to court, it is not free of government pressure, and that pressure is all the more insistent in that the financial survival of the newspapers depends entirely on government advertising, the overdraft privileges granted by government-controlled banks, and various kinds of aid granted by the state.

Judging from what the newspaper editors say, the smallest article or briefest note can result in telephone calls and reprimands. The daily LE MATIN announced in full-page ads that it was going to publish the best excerpts from Abdelmoumen Diouri's satirical booklet "To Whom Does Morocco Belong? But it "spontaneously" abandoned its project after it was asked to "take the interests of Algerian foreign policy into account."

Visits to Camp Ouargla Reported

92AF0591B Algiers EL WATAN in French
13-14 Mar 92 p 2

[Article from APS: "Ouargla Security Center: Reunions"]

[Text] Detainees at the Ouargla security center continue to see their relatives and friends, it was stated there, at the start of this month of Ramadan. The few moments spent near the internment center revealed a set-up, which seems to satisfy visitors and members of the local chapter of the Algerian League for Human Rights [LADH]. This security center, where some 2,200 persons are interned, according to official sources, is located in the downtown area of the city of Ouargla, which by all appearances is convenient for the majority of the visitors who come from all over to visit their relatives. So as to cut down the long trips between the place of internment and the visitors center, the authorities

have decided to use the enclosure of the "Said Otba" camel market located at the northeastern exit of the wilaya's seat as a reunion center and where the necessary measures have been taken to facilitate the task of handling visitors.

Thus a certain number of temporary structures (lighted tents, mobile phones, toilets, and parking areas) has been set up inside this enclosure. When the fast is broken, free meals are given out at the wilaya employees' residence by the Algerian Red Crescent and the Institute for Professional Training, in addition to invitations issued by citizens and friends living in Ouargla, thus recalling how ancestral hospitality, which remains the pride of the region, is maintained.

The announcement by the military authorities permitting detainees to receive weekly family visits in accordance with the program set up for each wilaya aroused genuine interest and lively satisfaction on the part of relatives and friends of the people involved. That is why many vehicles bearing license plates from wilayas in the eastern part of the country can be seen in the main town of the Ouargla wilaya at this beginning of the month of Ramadan, when traffic nevertheless remains heavy.

Officials' Courtesy

Inside and around the visitors center's enclosure there is much more of a reunion atmosphere between relatives and friends, in which sometimes the only tie that binds them remains the fact that one of their own has been detained.

They come in private cars, by taxi, by bus, and even by airplane. Holding the visitor's permit issued by the authorities in the wilaya of the internee's place of residence, the relatives of the detainees, some, however, showing signs of fatigue due to the long trip and the lack of sleep, are eager to see and be near their relative as quickly as possible and to inquire after his condition, even if for a few short minutes. Besides, among the facilities made available to visitors, relatives and friends of the detainees are supplied with visitors passes at the Ouargla visitors center itself. This measure has been greatly appreciated by the visitors, who insisted on emphasizing it as well as the courtesy of the officials charged with permitting the visits.

Around the enclosure, which faces the security center, and as they await the time of the visit (set between 0900 and 1600), the otherwise very visible embraces and handshakes are more than indications of sympathy. However, certain groups are disrupted by some of the women accompanying them. Anxious to see their sons or their husbands again, the women periodically break out in sobs, thus shattering the silence within the group.

According to the routine that has been set up, all visitors can pay a visit to the detainee on the same day. Rare are the visitors who are rescheduled for the following day. This is something tied to [the center's] organization and discipline, it is said locally. One citizen from the wilaya of Boumerdes encountered Thursday told APS that the pass allowed him to pay a visit to his brother on the day he wanted. In this regard it should also be mentioned that the

military authorities have engaged a bus to go between the visitor and the security centers. According to sources that are in agreement, the meeting between the detainee and the members of his family takes place at the security center itself and lasts at most 30 minutes.

This caused an elderly man who had come from Khenchela to see his son to say: "The time for our visit isn't long, yet it allows each detainee to chat with his relatives," adding that "the large number of visitors doesn't allow each one of the families to monopolize the visiting room for itself for the entire day."

The reunion takes place in a huge hall divided by bars. As in every reunion of this sort, the first words are given over to that moral support that the visitors try to give the detainee, and then a family environment is soon reestablished.

Some talk of the last visit by the human rights delegation to this camp, others of life inside and outside the camp, still others describe their social situation. It is sometimes observed that the distracted detainee forgets he is in an unenviable situation and occasionally lets out a nervous laugh, which draws several indiscreet glances [from others] in the room.

As for the food, this is not a gourmet restaurant and this is a fact that is poorly viewed by certain detainees, especially at this time of Ramadan. Besides, and according to visitors questioned, "the meals served to detainees are not of a consistent quality but what we bring them makes up somewhat for the lack of calories." According to the president of the local chapter of the LADH and even some relatives of detainees, the detainees spend their time getting to know one another and in particular reading.

No Torture

At the Ouargla security center, the atmosphere in which the internees live is neither that of a vacation resort nor that of a prison with all its rigor. But, although they are subjected to neither bullying nor torture, many among them believe they have nothing to do with the disturbances of recent months and hope their cases will be reexamined so as to be back as soon as possible in an environment that they left hastily, that of a family and close friends.

The president of the local chapter of the LADH confirmed that the internees have not been subjected to torture since being at the Ouargla center, adding in the same connection that her chapter has devoted special attention to the humanitarian aspect of the detainees and their families.

Gang Trading in Arms Broken Up

LD2302173792 *Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic*
1700 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] In Western Algeria the activities of a gang that trades in firearms was ended recently. The gang consists of 24 people.

According to a statement issued by the National Gendarmerie at Mascara, members of the gang were arrested at

wilayas of Mascara, Saida, and Tiaret as they were carrying out their activities, which were for purely commercial purposes.

Twelve Arrested for Suspected Arms Trafficking

92AF0559A *Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French*
4 Mar 92 p 4

[Unattributed article: "Arms Traffic in Bejaia: 12 Taken Into Custody"]

[Text] Members of the Fenaia (Sidi Aich) police force have just arrested 13 individuals allegedly involved in handgun (automatic pistols) trafficking, possession, and sale, the Bejaia unit indicated.

From the same source we learned that, acting on a tip and after searching the suspects' domiciles as ordered by the public prosecutor's department, the investigators eventually found a large arms shipment consisting essentially of seven 8-mm automatic pistols of various makes, including some "Perfecta," some "Commander," one "Beretta," one "Black Power" brand revolver, one hunting rifle, two bullet molds, one round of cartridges for these weapons, 33 home-manufactured shots, 1365 caps, a large quantity of buckshot, and six boxes of black powder.

Brought before the public prosecutor's department, the individuals involved were taken into custody, except for one who is said to have been released on his own recognizance. Another individual, the source reported, was released for lack of sufficient evidence. This individual, a Batna resident, is said to have been mentioned by the accused as being a member of the network.

According to the local police, none of these individuals belongs to any given political trend.

Daily Reports Distribution Problems

92AF0545D *Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French*
2 Mar 92 p 2

[Article by Ahmed Abbad: "Poor Distribution of Newspapers"]

[Text] Sidi Bel-Abbes—Recently it has been noted that many tobacconists are no longer selling certain newspapers, including ALGER REPUBLICAIN.

Although ALGER REPUBLICAIN's readership is expanding and demand is increasing, three tobacconists have quit selling it. Thus, out of a total of 16 agents, eight have quit selling it.

This situation, already reported in the 31 October 1991 issue of ALGER REPUBLICAIN, is only getting worse. To discover the causes, we questioned our retailers. All of them put the blame on ENAMEP-Ouest.

The following are among the complaints made about this enterprise:

- ENAMEP does not honor tobacconists' wishes concerning quotas and ignores their protests that too few copies are delivered.

- Inordinate delays in submission of invoices make proper accounting impossible.
- Systematic failure to pick up unsold copies creates serious storage problems for the tobacconists in their cramped premises.

Also, it should be noted that many towns do not receive ALGER REPUBLICAIN, except for the three chief towns of the daïra.

The same situation exists for the six retailers in the town of Sidi Bel-Abbes, where because of the inconstancy and irregularity of ENAMEP-Ouest deliveries, many neighborhoods go without their newspapers.

It is clear everyone loses in this situation, including ENAMEP-Ouest.

Steps must be taken urgently to improve distribution, so that pluralism in the press may become a reality for everyone.

Guechi on Unemployment, Housing Shortages
92AF0529A Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
26 Feb 92 p 2

[Interview with Said Guechi, minister of vocational training and employment, by Salim Rebahi and Farida Larbi; place and date not given: "Government Program: 'Strategy of Hope'"; first paragraph is EL MOUDJAHID introduction]

[Text] Young people—that important sector of society—occupy a preponderant place in the action program adopted by the government in accordance with the guidelines established by the president of the HCE [High State Committee]. The man in charge of that important dossier on which Algeria's future depends is Said Guechi, minister of vocational training and employment. Here he gives us his first impressions.

[EL MOUDJAHID] Mr. Minister, the Council of Ministers has just adopted an action program reflecting the guidelines established by the president of the HCE. What does that program include for young people in the areas of training and employment?

[Guechi] That is a very pertinent question. I note that for the first time since independence, priorities have been established in a government program.

The priorities thus established are concerned with housing and unemployment. I feel that those priorities objectively embody the legitimate and much-awaited concerns of the homeless and unemployed.

I also feel that thanks to those priorities, hope will be reborn among the working classes, and if hope is reborn, it will, in my opinion, automatically activate the store of confidence that has been lacking until now and is necessary between the country's administrators and its people.

I cannot neglect to point out that the crisis in housing and unemployment is attributable directly to the various regimes, which succeeded each other until June 1991, the reason being the disregard for the people that was shown by those regimes as they undertook investments that were far from checking, absorbing, or controlling unemployment. There was also the complete absence of a housing policy that would have made it possible—if it had been carried out after independence with due regard for prospects, timetables, times, and resources—to reduce the intensity of the problem.

On the other hand, the unemployed have been left to take care of themselves to the point of despair.

The hope of acquiring a home had become a hope for a miracle—a gamble. The fact that the Algerian's dignity was not respected by ensuring him his right to acquire a home and a job proves, beyond all doubt, that there was absolute incompetence in managing the people's affairs. We felt that the deviation occurring immediately after independence had made the Algerian people feel that the regime or regimes existing before June 1991 understood the state as being for the interests of the state rather than a state for the

interests of the people. We feel that the state and all its institutions must be in the service of the people; its purpose should not be to perpetuate a government or the interests of a group or of individuals. Everyone is aware of the prestige achievements that were invested in by the previous regimes to the detriment of the economic-social priorities that have presented themselves to the people since independence.

[EL MOUDJAHID] To get back to the program for young people, can you describe its general outlines to us?

[Guechi] The government program reveals a strategy of hope that consists of accepting the challenge: of conquering the scourge of unemployment. All sectors in the state apparatus have been made aware of this and reminded of their responsibilities so that very, very quickly, the young Algerian will be able to find a job and a place to live, to build his life, and finally to say: "Here I am, an Algerian citizen."

As regards vocational training, even a cursory study of the labor market enables us to say unreservedly that the current vocational training programs are seriously out of date and far from meeting the needs of the economic apparatus. Unfortunately, those programs have produced only handymen. And that leads us to suggest that in this country, the death of the trades was planned by antinationalist hands.

We are going to buckle down immediately to the job, first of all, of finding out how far our Tunisian and Moroccan neighbors have progressed in the field of vocational training, and if necessary, we will have no reservations about contacting the most advanced countries in the field of vocational training, whether in Europe, the United States, or Japan, to draw our inspiration from them and restore this sector to its proper role, which is to provide the country and its economy with skilled manpower, proven know-how, and technology capable of rivaling that of the most developed nations.

[EL MOUDJAHID] What about provisions for the vocational placement of young people?

[Guechi] So far, we have in fact witnessed the establishment of various systems involving cooperatives and dealing with the employment of young people. But it seems imperative to me that we abandon for good those one-time actions, which are limited in time and space and begin implementing a genuine short-, medium-, and long-term employment policy. It must no longer be dependent on the fluctuations in the economic problem. Instead, it must reflect a responsible strategy that can guarantee forever the preservation of current jobs, wipe out current unemployment, and encourage the permanent creation of systematic new jobs before potential future unemployment builds up. As soon as possible, we should reach the point where the employment machinery will begin working again and the young graduate or any other jobseeker can quickly find employment.

This is therefore an ambitious strategy or labor policy involving all sectors of the state and the economic partners

in this country for the purpose of ensuring that all material, financial, and human resources will be mobilized for the achievement of that objective, which is in the national interest.

[EL MOUDJAHID] What measures are you recommending for guaranteeing implementation of this apparently ambitious strategy?

[Guechi] As you know, there is a government program for this sector. At my level, I have just set up a think tank to be responsible primarily for evaluating everything that has gone before in the field of employment. That think tank has also been made responsible for contacting the state sectors and all the economic partners, both public and private, with a view to taking an immediate inventory of all the jobs that may be available at all levels so that they can be filled without delay. We are counting in particular on the agricultural sector and especially on the expansion of cooperatives for developing land in the Saharan zones. For its part, reforestation could use a tremendous amount of manpower. In the sector of light industry, we are considering the establishment in the short term of production units for processes that do not exist in that sector.

In another connection, I have agreed with my colleague in the Ministry of Housing to begin visiting various governorates next week to restart construction projects that have been suspended and open new housing construction sites.

We have also given thought to the health sector. I have recommended to the think tank that we set up a multipurpose health cooperative in each commune with a three-brigade system.

In agreement with the Ministry Delegate for Local Communities, we have started looking for suitable sites where we can get that operation under way as soon as possible. If it becomes a reality, it will enable us to absorb some of the unemployment among graduates in that sector.

In that connection, the think tank will contact the Department of Medical Equipment to ensure procurement of the equipment needed by cooperatives of that kind.

That is all I can tell you about the subject for the moment. I am waiting until I have all the data I need so that I can draw up a more substantial action program.

[EL MOUDJAHID] Mr. Minister, do you have a message for young people, especially unemployed young people?

[Guechi] I feel in my innermost being the sense of helplessness being experienced by the unemployed and homeless, and I say to them: I realize that you have been patient long enough and that you are entitled to receive justice in the form of a job and a home. Just as I am morally grieved by the despair that is the lot of young Algerians who have been the object of a "hogra" that has lasted 30 years.

Along with all my colleagues in this sector, I pledge to try to relieve this situation very quickly, God willing.

Pipeline Contract With National Firms Signed by SONATRACH

*LD2602050092 Algiers Radio Algiers Network
in French 1800 GMT 24 Feb 92*

[Text] SONATRACH [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons], the main organization concerned with hydrocarbons, signed a contract with a group of national enterprises to construct a 431-km-long liquefied petroleum gas pipeline. SONATRACH, which gave us this information, points out that the contract demonstrates its wish to give preference to national facilities whenever possible, while at the same time observing the criteria of international competitiveness.

SONATRACH Reports on Oil Exploration, Output

*92AF0529C Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
26 Feb 92 p 9*

[Article by A. Mesbah: "Marketing 1 Billion Barrels of Petroleum Daily in Medium Term"; all quantities and figures as published; first paragraph is EL MOUDJAHID introduction]

[Text] SONATRACH [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons] drilled 25 wells in 1991 and completed 16 of them. Ten showed favorable results. But only five represent new discoveries; the others are extension wells. Four of those wells have a capacity of 46 million cubic meters of gas, and another has a capacity of 51 million metric tons of petroleum.

SONATRACH drilled no fewer than 25 exploration or extension wells in 1991 and completed 16 of them. Ten of them showed favorable results. Strictly speaking, there were only five new discoveries, including one gas well with a capacity of 46 billion cubic meters of gas. For their part, the four oil wells have a capacity of 51 million metric tons of petroleum. "These exploration results exceed those of the past two years," announced Mr. Attar, manager of SONATRACH's Exploration Division, during a press conference yesterday.

A budget of 2 billion dinars is devoted to that activity every year, with the result that it has been possible to complete a seismic profile covering 7,300 square km of Algeria.

For his part, Mr. Babaghayou, who is in charge of exploration, announced that his firm's missions in the field of exploration are aimed at discovering new resources in order to maintain the current rate of production and at guaranteeing secure energy supplies in the long term by extending exploration to unexplored zones, which present a very high risk but also a very high potential. Those zones are located in the eastern erg, Ain Salah, Timimoun, and elsewhere.

SONATRACH's exploration effort is linked to the need for knowledge concerning the nation's public mining resources and to the desire to deepen technical and scientific knowledge with respect to petroleum activity.

"The hoped-for result is that the amount of hydrocarbons we discover every year will equal the amount being exploited," Attar added. That is far from being the case in the present situation, because discovering 20 or 30 wells each year means that only 20 percent of the reserves can be replaced. Discovering 50 wells will mean that as much as 75 percent of the reserves may be replaced, and the figure might even reach 134 percent if 100 wells are discovered. At the current rate of production, it is possible that refining capacities, which amount to 20 million metric tons, will no longer be met by the year 2005, and this makes exploration activity very urgent and even vital.

Getting back to SONATRACH's recent discoveries, Attar announced that they were the exclusive work of SONATRACH, although two foreign companies did make two "rather significant" discoveries, including that by AGIP (Italy), which is estimated to total 60 million metric tons of petroleum. Another company, this one Australian (BHP), made a discovery in the Eastern Erg, but evaluation is not yet complete.

Discussing the matter of partnerships, Mr. Yassine, who is in charge of partnerships for exploration and production, said that resorting to foreign firms is aimed at reducing SONATRACH's budget, since those companies will take charge of exploration and drilling activity along with all the associated risks.

The second reason why partnerships are important is that they provide access to new technologies that SONATRACH has not yet mastered or knows nothing about. In that connection, the same official concluded by saying that SONATRACH's medium-term objective is to market 60 billion cubic meters of gas and 1 billion barrels per day of petroleum.

New Oil Discovery in Ghadames Basin Reported

92AF0545B Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
3 Mar 92 p 5

[Article: "SONATRACH: New Oil Discovery in Ghadames Basin"]

[Text] SONATRACH [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons] yesterday announced a new discovery made by its Italian partner AGIP Africa, Ltd. in the Zemoul El Kbar prospecting zone (parcel 403A) situated in the eastern erg, 320 km southeast of Hassi-Messaoud.

The well is located about 10 km from the BRN-1 well that led to the discovery of the Bir Rebaa Nord field.

It is the fourth well the Italian company has drilled thus far in its successful exploration program in this new oil province.

The 3,950-meter-deep Bir Rebaa Sud-Ouest exploratory well has confirmed the hydrocarbon potential of Triassic and Devonian reservoirs predicted by geological and geophysical studies.

Production tests, the first of which has just been conducted, will be completed sometime in March.

The output from the deepest reservoir was 4,600 barrels per day of oil (API rating: 52 degrees) and 355,000 cubic meters per day of natural gas.

Additional wells will be drilled in the vicinity to assess the productive potential of the field and complete the development program the SONATRACH-AGIP partnership has under way. These discoveries involve reserves in place that total about a billion barrels of crude oil, the SONATRACH communique concluded.

Easing of Price Restrictions Promised

92AF0585A Rabat L'OPINION in French
11 Mar 92 pp 1, 3

[Excerpts] At a time when it is faced with an explosion of anger among the people due to an unprecedented increase in prices the Algerian Government has decided on liberalizing prices at the end of the month of Ramadan. This liberalization of prices was recommended by the IMF.

For its part the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) sent a warning to the government and announced "that it would not remain silent or inactive in case of a further deterioration in purchasing power." At the same time the UGTA denounced "the sale at cut-rate prices and the abandonment of public companies for the benefit of the private sector." [passage omitted]

On 9 March the UGTA sent a warning to the government after the increase in prices recorded since the beginning of the month of Ramadan. It demanded that the government, "put an end to a socially disastrous situation."

In a statement read over the radio the UGTA, the principal Algerian central trade union organization, stated that "it would not remain silent or inactive in case of a further deterioration in the purchasing power" of salaried workers.

Since the period immediately before the beginning of Ramadan the prices of fresh food products have recorded increases ranging up to 200 percent for certain items.

For example, tomatoes have gone up from 20 to 40 and even 43 Algerian dinars (1.00 Algerian dinar = 0.38 Moroccan dirhams), squash has gone up from 16 to 60 dinars, and meat has risen from 160 to 220 dinars.

The UGTA, which denounced "the big mafia in the fruit and vegetable market and speculators of all kinds," accused the authorities of "intolerable laxity, neglect, and failure to do their duty, which is dramatically harmful to the interests of the workers and other, deprived social groups in the country alone."

It called the price increases "unbelievable." It "compared them to real acts of banditry" and demanded that the authorities "act quickly and with the greatest force...to put a definitive end to a disastrous social situation that is plunging the overwhelming majority of the people into destitution and despair."

The measures announced by the government to deal with this situation, particularly through the import of thousands of tons of meat and threats of fines against speculators, do not seem to have had much effect, while six days of the month of Ramadan have already gone by.

Meanwhile and at a time when it is faced with an explosion of anger among the people due to this sharp increase in prices, the Algerian Government announced on 8 March, following a cabinet meeting, that prices would be liberalized at the end of Ramadan. This action is stipulated in the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, the prices of certain products will continue to be subsidized until July, according to the Algerian Government, which has also studied the question of the reorganization of publicly owned companies and the need for protection of domestic production against illegal imports.

The announcement of the liberalization of prices attracted criticism from the UGTA, which said that it was "disturbed."

This liberalization of prices is a condition laid down by the IMF and the World Bank for the authorization of new loans to Algeria, whose foreign debt is estimated at \$25 billion.

The General Union of Algerian Workers, in referring to the intention of the government of Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali to privatize certain sectors of the economy, also denounced the "sale at cut-rate prices and the abandonment of public companies for the benefit of the private sector." In this connection it announced that "it would use the resources available to it under the law to oppose any policy" of this kind. [passage omitted]

Recovery Said Challenged by Parallel Economy

92AF0546B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
1 Mar 92 p 1

[Editorial by R.N.: "Recovery Tested by Parallel Economy"]

[Text] "The development of an informal or parallel economy centered on speculative trade and fraudulent imports gradually 'undermines' the productive sector, destroys the value of the national currency, and leads to the destruction of society's scale of values (work, morals, a sense of civic responsibility, and honesty)."

That sentence, taken from the government's action plan, provides a good summary of the evils that act as a real brake on the development of our economy and our society. Today one cannot speak of safeguarding national independence while doing nothing serious to combat that permanent sabotage.

Those who justify that antinational and antipeople drift by pointing to the shortage of essential items—which they themselves organize—and those who have done everything possible to gradually destroy our industrial apparatus carry a heavy responsibility.

All the economic indicators as announced by the government are in the red. Let us look at a few of them: 4 million Algerians are living below the poverty level, 50 percent of the world's exports of hard wheat are sold to Algeria, the real average income per capita has fallen by 22 percent since 1984, and the state's equipment expenditures are now only 7 percent, compared to 15.5 percent in 1985. Two-thirds of the operating budget is used to pay government employees. There is galloping inflation, and savings are declining at a faster and faster rate. Eighty percent of young people are unemployed. It would be difficult to paint a more dismal picture of the economic and social situation. According to the government itself, the gap between the incomes of wage earners and those of everyone else is growing wider and wider. Among the latter, most of whom pay no taxes at all, are the big black marketeers, and it is time to put them where they can do no harm if we want to give the just objectives of economic recovery a minimum chance of being achieved.

The fundamentalist parties, which have already led the country to the edge of civil war, claim that those activities are normal.

They are therefore harming the national economy directly. That is an additional reason to ban them. Those among them who claim to reject violence without ever clearly condemning it are following the same path. They are replacing necessary productive and creative effort with parasitism and speculation. They prefer charity over the necessary distribution of wealth. Their "charity" has nothing to do with the necessary national solidarity and a fair redistribution of national income. The "Islamic" markets are nothing but an attempt to disorganize commercial activity and prevent any rationalization of that activity. Any improvement in the economic area requires a resolute struggle by all the social partners and all citizens aware of the need to restore the authority of the state, whose role remains crucial in many respects.

Price Increases Reported for Ramadan

92AF0558B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
8 Mar 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Prices out of Sight"—first paragraph is ALGER REPUBLICAIN introduction]

[Text] The following measures were adopted by the government in an attempt to check price increases during Ramadan; they did not manage to break down speculation. Throughout the country, prices rose spectacularly on the very first day of Ramadan, and it does look as if this situation, a cause of distress for consumers, might continue in the coming days, unless equally spectacular measures are taken to crack down on speculators.

Tizi-Ouzou probably never saw such a lively Friday as that first day of Ramadan. A record crowd filled all the streets downtown, still more the shopping streets. At markets, especially the wholesale market, the prevailing atmosphere was apocalyptic: comings and goings, chaos, aimless

searching and looking, nearly always without success, as wholesale (not to mention retail) prices has risen out of sight.

In town, there was a rush on meat, in the supermarkets where prices were affordable and also at certain butcher's whose prices were close to OREVIC [expansion not given] prices and whose shops were full all day. It had been a long time, nearly one year, since butchers had had so much work in one day. Red meat is beyond the means of the average household, and people have stopped going to the butcher's.

Mostly, supermarkets were stormed even before they had taken delivery of their shipments. The downtown Galerie store was able to satisfy some of its numerous and restless customers when it sold off a few sheep carcasses in a matter of seconds.

On the other hand, around 1500, the new-town store sent back emptyhanded customers who had been waiting for a cut of meat since 1000; its shipment arrived at closing time.

There was a similar rush on fruits and vegetables, powder milk packets, tomato concentrate, fruit juices, zalabia and other holiday cakes. However, we noted a marked reluctance to buy fruits and certain vegetables that were already costing too much before the Ramadan, and still more during these first few days of fasting.

For instance, tomatoes, green peas, zucchinis, artichokes rose by 10 to 20 Algerian dinars overnight, to between 30 and 50 dinars per kilo. As for fruits, they are hard to find under 50 dinars [per kilo], except for oranges and mandarins, which were offered at 20 and 30 dinars.

Financing for Recovery Plan Uncertain

92AF0516B Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
27 Feb 92 p 4

[Text] The plan for economic recovery is well-known, but the means of financing, on the other hand, remain somewhat uncertain.

Between a depressed petroleum market, where the price per barrel remains below \$21, and a debt service that

amputates the greater part of foreign remittances, Mr. Ghazali's room for maneuvering appears to be quite narrow, and it is unclear that the action plan presented to the HCE [High State Committee] will truly bear fruit in a move toward recovery. In fact, it is worth noting that the action plan's fixed physical objectives cannot be attained except at the price of a consequent mobilization of foreign payments. Recording a step toward recovery in the context of a stable economy depends upon luck, over which Mr. Ghazali's government has no control. The fragility of the national economy results from the fact that it is outward looking, largely dependent upon foreign imports, and that foreign remittances are unpredictable, because they vary according to haphazard fluctuations in the oil market. When the action plan announces a 20-percent increase in imports for the year 1992, does that then mean that the credits and revenues will pick up? Certainly not.

The suspense remains and the credits delay in arriving, even if one believes that more understanding can be discerned in the international press with respect to the recent events connected with the reestablishment of State authority.

If the support of a country like Italy seems obvious in witness of their recent signing of two credit agreements for \$300 million, certain delays remain for other financial operations. The refinancing agreement led by Credit Lyonnais, for a total of \$1.5 billion, is still delayed in being formalized, because of reservations expressed by American and European banks, even if some bank sources believe a conclusion is imminent.

Certain French trade lines could, however, be unblocked the beginning of March, although the results of Mr. Brahimi's trip nevertheless do not translate into any formal promise of financial assistance.

What factors, then, does this latent hesitation obey with respect to Algeria: instability, politics, human rights?

The HCE and the Government, in reaffirming their commitment to the democratic process and to human rights, want in all cases to act in good faith. The inclusion of three dissident personalities from the opposition within the Government also seems to be part of this concern to make a good impression.

Poll Shows Youth Favor Contraception

92AF0558C Algiers *EL WATAN* in French
8 Mar 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Moroccan Youth: In Favor of Contraception"]

[Text] Young Moroccans in Casablanca and Rabat are for the most part opposed to polygamy, in favor of contraception, and they do not wish to have many children; these are a few of the results of a poll organized by some 100 sociology students, the answers to which were just counted at the Rabat faculty of arts.

Under the supervision of the head of the Casablanca Sociological Research Laboratory (LRS), Mohammad El Aouad, and sociologist Fatima Mernissi, the students polled some 2,000 young Moroccan females and males in both towns.

Thus, 90 percent of the youth declared themselves totally opposed to polygamy, and only 13 percent still consider marrying a person chosen by their family.

In passing, the pollsters noted that men (14 percent) are slightly "more romantic" than women (11 percent). But 70 percent, men and women, nevertheless believe that virginity remains "a must." However, [figure missing] percent—girls and boys—believe that virginity does not guarantee the success of a marriage.

Over one-third of the men polled declared themselves in favor of women's working, while 53 percent of the women said they intended to work. About one man in four (24 percent), and one woman in five, are opposed to women's working.

Eighty-five percent of the women and 71 percent of the men declared themselves in favor of contraception, and 50 percent of the young people polled said they wanted only one or two children.

Finally, whereas 40 percent of the men want a boy first, 26 percent of the women want a girl first.

In an interview with the AFP, Professor Aouad estimated that the young people of Casablanca and Rabat—two towns which, he said, "give the lead"—gave "an image of tomorrow's Morocco" but that the results would have been "quite different" in "outlying towns such as Marrakech or Fes."

Visit to Radio Beur Suggests Captive Audience

92AF0538B Algiers *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE* in French
26 Feb 92 p 7

[Article by Akila Benhamed: "A Station That Looks Ahead"]

[Text] While the entire French radio and television scene, following the example of MacDonalds in the field of French cuisine, tends to become Americanized, in outward form if not in substance, the fact remains that certain radio stations, wrongly labeled "small," have taken on a

titanesque job targeting a very specific audience. Radio Beur is definitely not the least of these and we visited its studio.

Paris (*LE SOIR*)—It was thanks to a recording studio that Radio Beur was able to set up shop in the crowded, poor district of Barbes not so very long ago. Chance has apparently arranged things well by bringing the station close to its listeners. Not that the location is ideal for radiobroadcasting, but the warmth of the atmosphere seems directly related to the cramped nature of the area. For the management team, love of the craft combined with what one might call unselfish activism for one of the noblest causes partially explains its success in this spot: maintaining Algerian culture in the broadest sense of the term among our emigre community. This veritable priesthood on which the Radio Beur team has embarked has not been easy. Set up three years ago in a chic building in Saint-Ouen, Radio Beur literally "stole" its listeners from peripheral stations having a national audience and even some beyond the borders.

Its specific audience? It targets a large number of Algerians, Maghrebians, and even French-speaking Africans culturally cut off from their countries. On this point, one can say without hesitation that the means used: musical variety shows and other broadcasts, have accomplished what they set out to do.

Confronted with the performance of these "radio fans," the owner of the famous fashionable building out of which Radio Beur was operating had no way to stop the red-hot fad but eviction. This in response to mounting pressure from certain quarters, particularly the right, whose rhetoric ("They also have it in their country") incessantly revolves around immigration.

It was therefore in their tiny "three-room walkup" that we visited the Radio Beur staff: Mohand, a doctor by profession, is the director. Farida, Youcef, and Yacine are the announcers. The premises? Very simple: a waiting room, a second very tiny room for the staff, and the third for equipment and casts.

Radio Beur has no lack of volunteers to star in its diversified broadcasts, which cover a very wide range from dedications to the "seer" Da Silva to "Parloir," an emotional program if ever there was one! It enables families to send messages to relatives in prison and injects a bit of family warmth into the penal institutions. We would also mention a program done by Yan, a psychologist who tries, often with success, to defuse situations narrated to him by listeners and help persons already confronting sociopolitical problems by giving them very wise and especially calming advice.

While political debate plays a smaller role, it is nevertheless present because to speak of Arab, Berber, Maghrebian, or even African culture inevitably comes down to talking politics: What's bred in the bone....

Guests often visit the Radio Beur studio. French, Beurs, and Algerians passing through delight young people. The same is true of the famous "Assima" of A. Meskoud.

Benefiting greatly from volunteer efforts, this station, which we cannot pick up here despite the perfect spot for it (98.2 FM), has followed a steady upward curve from the very beginning and keeps on going. "We receive many requests from French listeners who would rather hear us than hook up with famous peripheral radio stations that do not meet their needs," we are told by Youcef, the announcer and one of the main founders of Radio Beur. Jealously guarding their success, officials say they are ready to fight to protect their material but particularly

moral and cultural heritage that they want to bring to all uprooted persons living in France.

They also believe they have mobilized to provide a true image of the modernness, openness, and universality of Algeria because, like it or not, Radio Beur is a chiefly Algerian product, inasmuch as a French passport does not provide ease of communication. Clothes do not necessarily make the man!

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